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From \$100 to Generations of Torah

By Rabbi Moshe Hirschberg



I would like to share an incredible story about the great Rabbi Shimon Baadani (1928—2023) — a story that high-lights not only the greatness of those who learn Torah, but also the profound impact of those who support it.

Rav Shimon would travel around the world raising the nec-essary money to fund his *kollel's* ongoing needs, simultane-ously strengthening people in Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. On one such trip, he met with a wealthy businessman. As their

meeting concluded, Rav Shimon asked, “Is there anyone else in this office who has the means to give?”

The businessman thought for a moment and pointed to an Israeli employee. “That one,” he said. “He’s capable — but he probably won’t give anything substantial. Likely, not even a penny.”

Wants to Give Him an Opportunity to Support Torah

Rav Shimon replied simply, “I want to give him the opportunity to support Torah,” and he approached him. He warmly explained the mission of his *kollel*, the financial strain of the *yungerleit*, and the importance of *hachzakas Torah*, asking if he might be willing to contribute — even a small amount.

At first, the man showed little — if any — interest. But Rav Shimon persisted gently. “For your own sake,” he said, “those who support Torah become elevated people. I want to give you this *zechus*.”

Still, nothing seemed to move him.

Then Rav Shimon mentioned that there was a *yungerman* in his *kollel* who shared the same name. “Perhaps you can support him personally,” he suggested. Something shifted. “Maybe we share the same *mazal*,” the man thought. He reached into his pocket, pulled out a crisp \$100 bill, and handed it over.

But before parting, he added firmly, “This is the *only* time. You will not see another *penny* from me. This is not why I came to America!”

Rav Shimon nodded. “This will be the last time I ask.”

A Promise is a Promise

The following year, Rav Shimon returned and once again met the wealthy businessman. He noticed the Israeli was still there — but true to his word, he did not approach him, he just made eye contact and offered a friendly gesture. A promise is a promise.

As Rav Shimon finished and began to leave, he suddenly heard someone calling after him.

It was the Israeli.

“Last year I gave you,” he said. “Why didn’t you come to me this year?”

Rav Shimon looked at him in surprise. “We made an agreement — you said that was the last time.” The man shook his head.

“Rav Shimon, you have no idea what happened. From the moment I gave that \$100, everything changed. Investments that had been stagnant suddenly succeeded. Opportunities opened up in ways I had never seen before.”

He then said something remarkable: “From now on, every time you come to this office, I want you to come to me. I want to continue supporting that *yungerman*. I want a connection to Torah.”

And so, it was. Each year, in addition to his meetings with the philanthropist, Rav Shimon would visit this man — who instead of giving \$100 now gave generously and gladly.

Notices that the Man was No Longer There

A few years later, Rav Shimon returned again, but this time the man was no longer there.

“Where is our friend?” he asked.

“You didn’t hear?” came the reply. “He became extremely successful — he started his own company, built factories, hired employees, and is doing very well.”

Rav Shimon arranged to meet him, and as soon as they sat down, the man said, “Everything you’re about to say — I already know. It all started with that \$100. That small act connected me to Torah, and from there came all my *hatzlachah*.” He added, “But it didn’t just change my business — it changed me. I began learning on my own. I became *koveia itim laTorah* — something I had never done before.”

Years passed, and this Israeli’s son grew up in a home that had been transformed — not just materially, but spiritually. This was no longer a family distant from Torah, but one deeply connected to it. The boy flourished, eventually choosing to devote his life to Torah and moving to *Eretz Yisrael* to continue learning. In time, he was suggested a *shidduch* — with... the daughter of that very *yungerman* his father had supported years earlier.

The Connection Had Come Full Circle

The connection had come full circle. The family his father had helped build became the very family into which his own son would marry.

As the years went on, the son-in-law developed a deep appreciation for his father-in-law’s Torah. Not only did he cherish his teachings, but he took it upon himself to publish them, transforming them into beautifully produced *sefarim*, dozens of them. All of this — from a single moment, from one small act, from one \$100 bill.

What seems like a simple act — a modest donation, a passing connection — can become something far greater. That \$100 was not just money; it was a

doorway. A connection to Torah. A source of *brachah*. A force that rebuilt a life, elevated a family, and shaped generations. Because when a person connects himself to Torah — even in the smallest way — he is not just giving. He is building.

Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos – Kedoshim 5786 email of Zichru Toras Moshe

Trusting in Hashem



Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski

Veritably, one who lives with bitachon, trust in Hashem, finds joy much easier to achieve. Knowing that He is in charge of the outcome makes life and its challenges much more acceptable.

Rabbi Dr. A. Twerski relates a lesson that he learned from a young woman in recovery for alcoholism and drug addiction. She related to him the story of her original decline and subsequent recovery. It is a lesson from which we can all derive life instruction.

The woman explained to Rabbi Twerski that she was a rabid Jets (football team) fan. Indeed, she never missed a game. One weekend she had to travel which precluded her from attending the game. She asked a friend to tape it on her VCR. When she returned, she picked up the tape together with the knowledge that the Jets had won that game.

She related that, when she watched the game, she was shocked by some of the mistakes her team was making. By half-time, they were down by twenty points. Under normal circumstances, she would, at this point, be climbing out of her skin from nerves. She was so attached to the team and the sport that, by now, she would have reached for all the alcoholic beverages she had rejected due to their negative effect on her health.

This time, however, she watched and maintained a relaxed, civil attitude. Why? Because she was acutely aware of the outcome of the game: The Jets had already won. This is what counted uppermost in her mind.

After relating this story, she told Rabbi Twerski, “When I entered this recovery program, I made a conscious decision to turn my life over to the will of G-d. Since G-d is in charge of my life, I know things will eventually work out. True, at times I am twenty points behind in my life; everything seems to be going against me. Nonetheless, I do not panic because I know that ultimately, I will win.”

If we believe in Hashem, we know the outcome will be good. This alone is reason to feel a sense of joy.

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5786 email of Peninim on the Torah as compiled and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum.

Danny Thomas & Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski.

By Rabbi Yisroel Bernath

Back in the 50s, Danny Thomas was a major TV star who had a successful comedy series on national television (CBS) called ‘Make Room for Daddy’ (Later changed to ‘The Danny Thomas Show’). The son of Maronite Christian immigrants from Lebanon, read that a young medical student, the son of Chassidic immigrants from Ukraine, was struggling to pay his tuition, and donated the shortfall. As a result, countless lives were saved and made better by Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski, who passed away exactly one year ago.

Rabbi Twerski described the story in an interview with the Pittsburgh Quarterly on November 19, 2007:

“By that time, I had several children, so my dad and some members of the congregation helped me to pay for school. I applied for a scholarship through a

foundation, but it didn't come through, so in my third year, I fell two trimesters behind on tuition.

One day, I called my wife at lunch as always, and she asked, "What would you do if you had \$4,000?" I said, "I'm too busy to talk about fantasies." She said, "But you really do have \$4,000!" I said, "From where?" She said, "From Danny Thomas." "Who's Danny Thomas?" She said, "The TV star."

Then she read me an article from The Chicago Sun. Local officials had told Mr. Thomas about a young rabbi who was struggling to get through medical...

Rabbi Twerski was a scholar with feet planted firmly in two worlds — the rabbinic world of Torah and Talmud study, and a medical doctor and licensed psychiatrist. It was a rare pairing that earned him respect in both the insular ultra-Orthodox Jewish world and wider American society. He was an expert on addiction and scion of a long line of prominent rabbis descended from the 18th-century founder of Hassidic Judaism, the Baal Shem Tov.



A young Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski with Danny Thomas (George P. Koshollek Jr., The Milwaukee Journal, and the LIFE Photo Archive)

Rabbi Twerski was a prolific writer. He authored dozens of books on a wide array of subjects: from addiction and mental health to religious law for medical professionals and commentaries on Jewish texts. Twerski also collaborated with late “Peanuts” comic strip creator Charles Schulz on a series of popular self-help books featuring Charlie Brown and Snoopy.

May his memory be for a blessing.

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The Urchins' Revenge

By Elchonon Isaacs



Art by Sefira Lightstone

Yaakov Abulafia and Yitzchak Shraga were both orphaned at a young age, and united by their common fate, they became best friends. They passed their days on the streets of Baghdad and supported themselves by taking what did not belong to them. There was no crime in the neighborhood that did not have their names on it, and they often sat behind bars.

One day, they noticed a large crowd assembling outside one of the mansions in the city; it was the house of the local magnate Avraham ben Chasdai. The two blended into the crowd, and seeing the tables lavishly set with all kinds of delicacies, they entered the house. They did not waste any time filling their plates.

A Young Man of 17 Dressed in Fancy Clothes

Suddenly, the loud sound of a bell was heard. A band started playing, and a children's choir began singing. Everyone stood up at the sight of a young man of

17 dressed in fancy clothes, with a white tallit over his head. He was escorted by his parents, and three rabbis stood behind them.

When the young man reached the podium, the band stopped playing and the chief rabbi took out a scroll and began reading: “We, the undersigned, are giving our approbation and ordaining the young man, the honorable Rabbi Yehuda ben Chasdai. From now on he may instruct and adjudicate any halachic [Jewish legal] matter.”

The Two Boys Were Awed by Their Peer’s Knowledge

The chief rabbi then invited the new rabbi to speak. After his opening remarks, in which he thanked his parents and teachers, he proceeded to dazzle the crowd with an erudite Talmudic and halachic discourse. The two boys, Yaakov and Yitzchak, were awed by the knowledge of their peer, and they started pushing their way through the crowd until they were visible to the young speaker.

When the young new rabbi saw the pair, he interrupted his discourse and blurted out, “What are you two doing here?” Ashamed, they quickly disappeared.

They were burning with an urge for revenge. ‘Let us ambush the new rabbi at night and beat him to a pulp,’ Yaakov suggested.

What Are We Going to Gain By Beating Him Up?

Yitzchak hesitated. “What are we going to gain from a beating? He embarrassed us in public, which is equivalent to murder.¹ I have an idea, we should do the same and embarrass him in public, and then take the honor and praise.”

“But how?” countered Yaakov.

“We will leave Baghdad, and we will go to a place of Torah study for five years where we will study day and night diligently until we will be on par with our arrogant friend. Then we will be able to pay him back,” Yitzchak said.

Their desire for revenge was so strong that they made a pact to execute the plan come what may.

They came to the city of Borsippa where there was a great yeshivah. There was a rich man who was willing to support the duo, and they boarded with him. Slowly, they mastered the language of the Talmud and began advancing in their learning.

After five years passed, they decided to extend their learning for a few more years. Eight years passed, and they became known as great sages. They were in high demand as marriage partners, and they soon married and started families.

Once they attained the status of great sages, the time had come to execute their plan. They took leave of their wives and began the trip back to Baghdad. When they arrived, they saw a notice on the town bulletin that the wise Rabbi Yehudah ben Chasdai would be speaking at the great synagogue.

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he next day they were in attendance at the synagogue among the large crowd who came to listen. It was a complicated lecture and connected to practical halachah. Yaakov and Yitzchak could not help but notice that the premise was flawed.

Yaakov wanted to shout out and refute the rabbi, but Yitzchak nudged him with his elbow and whispered, "Let us not embarrass him in public. It is only in his merit that we are where we are today."

A Refutation for the Rabbi's Halachah Lecture

At the conclusion of the lecture, they approached the rabbi: "We heard your talk but we have a refutation. If the talk had been given on the Aggadic [narrative] parts of the Talmud we would have remained silent, but since it concerns practical halachah, we must make our case known."

They detailed their reasoning, and Rabbi Yehuda exclaimed in awe, 'Such knowledgeable Torah scholars I have never met!'

"You did meet us in the past," they retorted. 'You also embarrassed us in public.'

Stunned by the claim, the rabbi insisted that he had never met them.

"Try to remember when you embarrassed two people that did nothing wrong to you,' they said to him.

After a pensive moment, the rabbi began, 'Only once in my life did I embarrass anyone in public, and that was at my ordination ceremony when two local gangsters stood in front of me, and I chased them out. I have regretted that moment ever since.'

The two smiled and said, 'We are those gangsters!'

The rabbi was shocked and invited them over to his house to continue the discussion.

A Time to Atone For a Past Sin

The next day, Rabbi Yehudah assembled the townspeople, and in an emotional voice he recounted the story from the beginning. He also retracted

what he had said the day before. “It seems that I was made to err by heaven so that I could atone for my past sin,” he said.

At that moment, all those who were assembled accepted upon themselves not to embarrass any person. Rabbi Yaakov Abulafia and Rabbi Yitzchak Shraga went on to become great sages in different regions in Iraq.

(Translated and adapted from Sichat Hashavuah 554.)

FOOTNOTES

1. Talmud Bava Metzia 58b.

Reprinted from the Chabad.Org website.

Exactly What We Need, Exactly When We Need It

By Rabbi David Ashear

There are times when a person feels lacking—something he needs that is very important to him. It may seem small in the grand scheme of things, yet at that moment it means everything.

And then, in a way he could never have planned, Hashem provides that exact need at the perfect time. When that happens, a person feels more than ever that Hashem is not just running the world at large, but that He is caring for each individual in the most precise and detailed way imaginable.

A rabbi related that his daughter was progressing with a shidduch, and what weighed on him most heavily was the immediate expense he would have to pay the shadchan. It may sound trivial, but for someone who does not have the money, it is a very real pressure.

Someone shared with him a powerful story about having bitachon in Hashem, and it gave him a great deal of chizuk. His daughter became engaged, and he knew the shadchan would be at the engagement party—but he still did not have the money.

He continued strengthening himself in bitachon, knowing that Hashem has infinite ways to provide. That very day, he received a call regarding a boy who learns in the yeshivah where he teaches. The boy's father explained that his son was returning to the dormitory after being ill and asked the rabbi if he could help him settle back in.

This rabbi had helped the boy greatly in the past, which is why the father turned to him. He agreed, and on his way to the engagement, he stopped at the yeshivah and helped the boy organize his belongings.

While doing so, he noticed an envelope in one of the boy's bags addressed to him. Later, he opened it and found a heartfelt thank-you letter—and inside was two thousand euros. It was enough to pay the shadchan, to buy a Shas for the new chattan, and there was even some left over.

The rabbi was awed at how Hashem provided him with exactly what he needed, at the exact moment he needed it.

A man told me that he needed a dining room table very badly, but they were far too expensive for him. The cheapest table he could find, one that matched his dining room and met his needs, was two thousand dollars—still beyond what he could afford.

He said to himself, Hashem can give us a dining room table without us having to spend so much money.

That very day, he heard about someone giving away a dining room table. He inquired and discovered that it was the perfect size—and it matched as well. He told them he would like it if possible.

Within twenty minutes, the table was delivered to his home and set up in his dining room. Just like that, he had received a ten-thousand-dollar table completely free of charge.



Hashem is concerned with all of our needs, and if something is good for us to have, He will provide it—often in ways we never could have imagined.

Another man said that his wife bakes challot every week, and sometimes they have extras that they know they will not use. Usually, they give them to

family members. But the week before Pesach, she told her husband to bring them to shul to see if anyone there might need them.

That day, he missed his regular minyan and went to a different shul. There, he gave the challot to the rabbi and asked him to see if anyone might need them. Shortly afterward, a man in that shul saw the rabbi carrying challot and asked about them. It turned out that his housekeeper had accidentally thrown out all of their challot from the freezer while cleaning it for *Pesach*, including those they had prepared for that very Shabbat.

He was overjoyed to receive fresh challot.

The man who had brought them later reflected: look how Hashem guided me to a different shul, just so I could bring challot to someone who needed them at that exact time.

Whether it is money, a dining room table, or challot for Shabbat, every person has different needs at different times. And it is very comforting to know that Hashem is involved in each person's life—down to the smallest details.

Reprinted from the April 23, 2026 email of Living Emunah.

The Angel's Mistake



The Sadugeira Rebbe zt'l told a story that happened in the time of the Rambam. (The story is written in Ner Yisrael, vol.3, p.40):

It was a year of drought. Strong, fierce winds blew that year, but instead of the winds bringing in rain, the winds only caused havoc. The crops didn't grow well, and people were hungry. Everyone hoped that the next year, things would be better.

A malach (angel) pleaded before Hashem, "Let me run the world for a year", and Hashem consented. That year, rain fell abundantly, always at the right times, and the weather was always fair and tranquil. There weren't any strong winds. The wheat stalks grew tall and were packed with robust kernels. The wheat kernels were ground into fluffy, snow-white flour. However, when baked in an oven, the bread crumbled into tiny pieces. All crops were useless and inedible.

The malach returned to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and asked what he had done wrong. Hakadosh Baruch Hu explained that when a wheat kernel is planted in the ground, it rots and becomes part of the earth, then it grows into a wheat stalk. Nevertheless, the element of "earth" is still attached to the wheat kernels. The earth element in the wheat causes the wheat particles to detach from one

another. This is the reason winds are important. The winds shake off the earth particles from the wheat.

But the year the malach led the world, there weren't any strong winds. The malach thought it was doing a favor for the world, but as a result, the earth element remained within the wheat. This is the reason the bread crumbled and didn't hold together.

Hashem knows best how to lead the world, and no one should try to take His place. As in Hilchos Kibud Av v'Em, there is a prohibition **לישב ממקומו**, to sit in one's parents' place, so, too, no one should try to sit in Hashem's place to lead the world. Only Hashem knows what is truly good for each individual and for the world.

Let us also learn from this story that when something seems bad to us, it is good. The strong winds seemed bad to people (and to the malach), but Hakadosh Baruch Hu's wisdom is endless; He knows what must be done. We often don't know why and how everything is for our good, but we can rely on Hashem that it is certainly so.

As a great tzaddik said, "It is a great distress and an embarrassment if I would serve a G-d whose ways I can understand." Hashem's wisdom is so far greater than ours, it is only reasonable and rationale that there will be things Hashem does that we don't understand. Therefore, if "strong winds" of tzaros blow, we must believe that this is chesed in concealment. Very good things will come from it.

Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos – Kedoshim 5786 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

The Dancing Girls

The [Chassidic] courts of Ruzin were run with royalty. The Grand Rabbis of the Ruzin dynasty lived in lavish palaces, wore expensive clothing and lived very high classed lifestyles. It started with Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzin who started leading such a lifestyle. He held that it was important to take materialism and elevate it for Hashem. As a soldier of Hashem, it befitted such royalty.

Everyone recognized his greatness and no one dared challenge him. He would walk around wearing pure golden boots. Nobody knew that the holy rabbi was so great that he wore golden boots but they had no soles, he was walking

barefoot. It was only when walking in the snow did his followers notice drops of blood under his footsteps and then they began to realize that their Rebbi was a walking angel!

However, when he passed away and his children followed his ways, many great Rabbis felt that they weren't on that level of spirituality to lead a lifestyle of such wealth and royalty. To make things worse, false rumors started circulating about their behavior that wasn't the way it should be.

These rumors reached the ears of Rabbi Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam from Shineva, the son of Rabbi Chaim Halberstam, the Sanzer Rav. Before coming to any conclusions from the rumors he heard, he decided to send three of his students to check out. The three men headed out to the court of Rabbi Avraham Yaakov of Sadigur, the son of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzin. They arrived there during the week of Selichos, late at night.

There are different customs about saying Selichos. Some say at midnight and some say early morning. The spying guests weren't sure what was the custom in Sadigur and didn't dare ask, being careful not to disclose their identity and reason of their visit. They decided to come with their Tallis and Tefillin and look through the window. If the Shul was empty then it means they had already davened Selichos. If they were sitting studying then it meant they were still before davening. If they were davening without Tallis and Tefillin then they were saying selichos and if they were wearing their Tallis and tefillin then it means they were already davening Shacharis.

They made their way to the Shul and quietly looked through the windows. They were so shocked at what they saw they nearly fainted. They looked at each other and couldn't even utter a word. In the Shul were tens of non-Jewish local girls holding hands together and dancing vigorously. They had finished their mission. They didn't need to see anything more. They quietly walked back to their hotel, davened and headed back to Shineva.

They entered the Rabbi's study and told him that the terrible rumors were true and continued to tell him what they saw. The Rav trusted his students' honesty. But even so he told them not to mention a word about what they saw for three days. Three days later they were called to see their Rebbi.

In his study were two students tired and worn out from a journey standing there too. The Shineva Rav turned to the two tired students and asked them to tell their story.

"We travelled to Sadigur as the Rebbi instructed. We checked out when they say selichos and we were told that they say early morning when it is still dark

outside. We got to the Shul and it was packed with the hundreds of Sadigur Chassidim saying Selichos. We carefully pushed our way to the front to see the Rebbi. But in Sadigur the Rebbi davens in a side room next to the Shul.

He exited just for the 'Aneinu' at the end. His face was white as a sheet. He walked up to the Aron Hakodesh, opened it and then started saying Aneinu, piece by piece. Not an eye stayed dry in the whole Shul."

"As soon as they finished the Rabbi went back into his room and everyone started leaving the Shul. We were told that the Rebbi is preparing himself for Shacharis. However, since the Shul was so dirty from everyone's shoes and boots they could not leave the Shul so messy. So, everyone exited and tens of local non-Jewish girls came to wash, scrub and clean the wooden floor.

"But for Sadigur that wasn't enough. They then poured wax polish over the floor and had to shine the floor. In order to get the floor shiny and sparkling quickly they all stepped on to cloths, held hands and started sliding their feet around the Shul until the floor was sparkling, befit of a Royal Synagogue."

The Shineva Rav turned to the three students and said, "that was the girls dance you saw. But it's not enough just to see, one has to understand too!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos-Kedoshim 5786 email of Inspired by a Story by Rabbi Dovid Caro.

The Tears of the Ponovezher Rav

By Yoni Schwartz

A 50-year-old Israeli man walked into a kiruv yeshiva in Israel, sat down in front of the rabbi, and said, "I am finally here. I am ready to start learning Torah."

The rabbi was bewildered, so the man explained his story. "After the Holocaust," said the man, "my mother moved to Israel. Her husband and entire family were killed. Then she had me. However, she struggled so much financially that she simply couldn't support me, so she sent me to the Ponovezher Rav's orphanage in Bnei Brak. I was doing well, had friends, and was enjoying learning Torah. However, my mother was deeply traumatized by the war and didn't want me to have anything to do with religion because she had suffered so much from being Jewish. So, when she found out that I was learning Torah, she came down and pulled me out of there by my hand.

When the Ponovezher Rav heard this, he dropped everything he was doing and traveled a long distance to visit our home. He tried everything he could to

convince my mother to let me stay, but to no avail. When he realized that was it, he put his hands on the table, put his head down, and began crying uncontrollably for 30 minutes. He didn't say anything more to my mother or me; he was just absolutely heartbroken. Then he got up, thanked my mother for her time, wished me a wonderful life, and left. Over 40 years have passed, and I still have not been able to forget that image of him crying. That is why I'm here."

Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos-Kedoshim 5786 email of Torah Sweets.