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A Yom Kippur War Lesson for All Times



Rabbi Shimshon Pincus, zt'l

Rav Yechiel Spero related a story. Rosh Hashanah had arrived and Meir Goldbaum, a 17-year-old Yeshivah Bachur was disappointed. He was learning in a Yeshivah in Eretz Yisroel. He had worked very hard to improve in his Yiras Hashem, both in his Davening and learning, but he felt he had not progressed sufficiently for the Yom HaDin. As a Talmid of Rav Shimshon Pincus, zt'l, Meir had begun to understand what the awe of the Yamim Nora'im meant. Rav Shimshon's inspiring Shmuesen had made a distinct impression on him, and resulted time and again in commitments and resolutions to improve in his Avodas Hashem, and time and again Meir failed to put his commitments into action.

As a result, he felt like a complete failure. On Rosh Hashanah morning, Rav Shimshon stepped outside the Bais Medrash for a moment during the Chazan's repetition of Shemoneh Esrei, and he spotted his Talmid sitting on a chair in the corner of the hallway, with his head between his knees. Rav Shimshon, with his warm and caring demeanor, approached Meir, placed a hand on his shoulder, and asked him why he seemed so depressed.

Meir looked up into his Rebbe's gentle eyes and poured out his frustration. He told him how hard he had tried during the past Elul to improve, and how each time his efforts had fallen short. In essence, Meir perceived himself as a total failure. He had pledged that this Rosh Hashanah would be different, and he would rise to the occasion, yet, he had not. Meir cried bitterly and hung his head in shame.

Rav Shimshon sat down next to the young boy and related the following story: It was in the middle of the Yom Kippur War, October of 1973. I was sitting in the Emergency Room in the Shaarei Zedek hospital waiting for one of my children to be seen by a doctor for a cut that apparently needed stitches, when I noticed a bit of a commotion taking place. Many doctors had converged in front of the Emergency Room doors and appeared to be discussing an important matter. I inquired as to what was the cause of the commotion, and I was told that a soldier had been shot and had been brought to the hospital. The bullet was lodged in his leg and it needed to be taken out.

After the doctor removed the bullet, he notified the soldier, who had remained awake during the entire procedure, that the surgery was complete, and he was free to go home. The young man, no older than nineteen years old, grimaced in pain as he struggled to slide off the operating table. Beads of sweat formed on his forehead and he looked curiously at the doctor. He said, "Home? You think I'm heading home? True, I was shot and lost this battle, but there's a war raging out there and my fellow soldiers need me back on the battlefield!"

The brave young man hobbled out of the room and headed back out toward the front lines. Rav Shimshon concluded the inspiring story and looked into the eyes of the young Bachur. He said, "Meir, I'm not going to convince you that you have not stumbled. But just because you've fallen does not mean you can't get back up. Losing a battle doesn't mean that you've lost the war. We're fighting a war in there and I don't want to head back in without you. We need you to fight alongside the rest of us!"

A small smile formed on Meir's face and he thanked his Rebbe for his warm words of encouragement. Rav Shimshon placed his arm around Meir's shoulder, and together they walked back into the Bais Medrash to "fight" alongside one another!

Reprinted from the Yom Kippur 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U' Tefilah.

A Most Unusual Shidduch

R' Yitzchok* was a respected yungerman in Lakewood, immersed in learning and raising his family with mesirus nefesh. His oldest daughter, Rivky*, had reached the age of shidduchim. She was a refined, thoughtful girl, serious about Torah and Yiras Shamayim, with a natural sweetness that drew people close.

Many suggestions came in, but strangely, none moved forward. Either the other side wasn't interested, or the shidduch collapsed at an early stage. R' Yitzchok and his wife never lost hope. They reminded themselves constantly: Shidduchim are from Hashem, not from people.

Still, as months stretched into two years, their hearts grew heavy. One day, an older friend of the family, an unassuming man with a big heart, came by their home. "I once heard of a bochur that might be a good fit," he told them hesitantly. "But I don't know much about him. He's learning in Eretz Yisroel now. Maybe I should check?"

The parents smiled politely—they had already heard so many vague suggestions. But this man felt a push in his heart, so he picked up the phone and called an old chavrusa in Yerushalayim to ask about the boy.

His chavrusa gasped. "You won't believe this. That bochur's Rosh Yeshiva has been looking for a shidduch for him, but every idea seems not to work out. People just... forgot about him. And yet he's an extraordinary ben Torah. The Rosh Yeshiva himself said he has the most sterling middos in the yeshiva!"

The family agreed to look into it. The reports were glowing: ehrlichkeit, Torah, sterling middos. They arranged for the boy to fly in for Pesach to meet Rivky. The first date went beautifully. On the second date, Rivky told her mother, "It feels like I've known him all my life."

Within a few weeks, the shidduch was closed, and a beautiful simcha filled their home. At the vort, the boy's Rosh Yeshiva shared a detail that left everyone stunned.

"Do you know why this shidduch took two years?" he asked softly. "Two years ago, this boy was in a serious accident. Boruch Hashem, he came out with his life—but it took him nearly a year and a half to recover fully. He is only now back to himself, ready to build a bayis ne'eman. Hashem Himself delayed the shidduch until both sides were prepared."

Everyone felt chills. What had seemed like endless waiting and rejection was, in truth, a perfectly orchestrated delay from Above—so that the right two neshamas could meet at the right moment.

Reprinted from the Parshas Shoftim 5785 email of The Weekly Vort.

The Prize Pupil

By Avrohom Barash



The Maharam Schick

R' Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Schreiber, known as the Ktav Sofer, was once vacationing in Marienbad, a popular resort area where many Torah leaders would congregate for a break from their demanding schedules. At the same time, a disciple of his father's, R' Moshe Schick, known as the Maharam Schick, was also staying there.

Although on vacation, the Ktav Sofer spent most of his time engrossed in his studies, using the few sefarim that he had brought with him. At one point he wished to refer to the Tur and sent one of his students to the Maharam Schick to ask whether he had a copy which R' Schreiber could borrow.

The Maharam Schick asked which chapter was needed, and told the student to return in two hours, when he would be able to give him what he had requested. It would seem that the Maharam Schick was then using the sefer in question and would only be finished in two hours, but when the student returned after that time, he was astounded to receive sheets of paper on which the requested chapter of the Tur had been painstakingly handwritten!

At first the Ktav Sofer wondered whether his father's disciple did not deem him trustworthy enough to lend him his sefer, and had thus taken the time and effort to copy out the pages that were needed. Soon, however, the matter was explained:

the Maharam Schick did not have a copy of the Tur with him; he wished to help out, and had therefore written the entire section from memory - word for word!

The Ktav Sofer, astounded by the genius of his father's student, was moved to tears. He marveled at the incredible ability of the Maharam Schick to record an entire section of the Tur from memory, adding that he was certain that it was the merit of his great teacher, R' Schreiber's own father, the Hatam Sofer, that had enabled the Maharam Schick to rise to such great heights. (A Mazeldig Voch)

Reprinted from the Parashat Ki Tesse 5785 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

A Day for Am Yisroel

By Aharon Spetner

The Eisentein family finished their delicious seudah hamafsekes. Totty put on his kittel and tallis, and then gave each of the kinderlach a heartfelt brocha before leaving the house with Moishy to go to shul for Kol Nidrei.

"I'm so excited for Yom Kippur," Moishy said as they walked down the quiet streets of Yerushalayim holding their machzorim. "The niggunim for the Yomim Nora'im davening are so beautiful."

"I agree," Totty replied. "But even more beautiful are the words in the tefillos, wouldn't you agree?"

"Oh yes, of course..." Moishy stammered sheepishly. "I guess I should pay more attention to the words themselves."

Totty smiled. "Why don't we talk about one of the things that we will say tonight right after Kol Nidrei? "Hashem will forgive the entire people of the Bnei Yisroel".

Many years ago (in 1998), I happened to be in America on Yom Kippur and I had the zechus to daven in Rav Avigdor Miller's shul. After Kol Nidrei, Rav Miller spoke about these words. He said that the reason Hashem forgives us for our aveiros is because we are part of Klal Yisroel.

We are part of all of the other Yidden who learn Torah and keep the Mitzvos. And because we identify with them and love them, Hashem says "Oh, you are part of My people? Then of course I want to accept your apologies and forgive you." Hashem "forgives the entire people" who are connected to "the entire people".

"That makes me so happy to live here in Yerushalayim with thousands and thousands of other Yidden," Moishy said. "We live in a city full of Hashem's people. I hope that itself will be a zechus for us to get a kapporah this Yom Kippur."

"I hope so too," said Totty.

As they approached the shul, they noticed a man standing outside with several large boxes.



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

“Totty, that looks like Tzadok ‘HaTzadik’!” Moishy said. “I thought he was still in jail.”

“Perhaps they let him out for Yom Kippur so he could daven in a normal shul,” Totty said.

Seeing them approach, Tzadok waved and called out to them.

“Gut Yom Tov!” he said. “Are you ready for Yom Kippur? Can I offer you some segulot to help you with your fast?”

“Segulot to help me?” Totty asked. “We just had a delicious and filling meal - do you know a better segulah than that?”

“Of course I do!” Tzadok said incredulously. “Look, here I have red strings - if Hashem forgives you they will turn white! And I have wheat stalks - that’s from the shivat haminim, you know. You put some of those into your hat and you will be

full as if you ate bread all Yom Kippur long! And look! I have little jars of the air of Eretz Yisroel - that's the holiest air in the whole world!"

"But we're in Eretz Yisroel right now," Totty said. "All of the air here is the air of Eretz Yisroel."

"Yes, but mine is in a jar," insisted Tzadok.

"Thank you, but no thank you," Totty said politely as he and Moishy walked past Tzadok and into the shul.

"Totty," Moishy whispered as they found their seats. "How could they let Tzadok stand out there like that? He's annoying everyone with his phony segulos. Why can't someone tell him to go away?"

"Moishele," Totty said gently. "Don't you remember what we were just talking about? We ask Hashem to be moichel us because we are a part of His people and we love all of His people who keep the Torah. Tzadok may be a bit confused, but he is Shomer Shabbos and wants to serve Hashem just as much as we do. We may feel sorry for him, but we must love him the same way we love every other Yid."

Moishy sat quietly thinking about this. Then he quickly jumped up, grabbing the little jar of besomim that they had brought with them.

"Where are you going?" Totty asked.

"I'll be right back," Moishy said, running outside to where Tzadok was standing.

"Here Tzadok," Moishy said, tipping some besomim into Tzadok's hand.

"What is this?" asked Tzadok.

"It's besomim," Moishy said. "It smells delicious, and if you find the fast getting too hard, you just give it a whiff and it will make it easier to fast."

"A new segulah???" Tzadok exclaimed joyously.

"I don't think it's a segulah," Moishy said. "It just smells good and helps take your mind off of the hunger."

"Sounds like a segulah to me!" Tzadok said with a huge smile. "Thank you so much!"

Gemar Chasimah Tovah!

Reprinted from the 5785 Yom Kippur email of Toras Avigdor Junior, based on the Torah teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt"l.

Yom Kippur Gems

When Fasting on Yom Kippur is a Sin



Rav Zev Leff

Rav Zev Leff was asked to speak to an elderly man who had been told by his doctor that he was suffering from a condition that could be life threatening if he fasted. Nevertheless, the man was determined to fast anyway. Rav Leff met with this man and explained to him that he must eat on Yom Kippur.

The elderly gentleman looked at Rabbi Leff and said, “Rabbi, you are a young man and I am about three times your age. Since my Bar Mitzvah I have not eaten on Yom Kippur, and I do not intend to start now.”

Rav Leff replied that he could not force him to eat on Yom Kippur, but as soon as the meeting was over, he would instruct his Gabai to never give him another Aliyah or any honor in his Shul ever again.

The man was shocked. He asked, “Why do I deserve such treatment for being strict with respect to Yom Kippur?”

Rabbi Leff told him, “We are prohibited from honoring those who worship idols.”

The man was now upset. He had never been accused before of doing Avodah Zarah! He demanded to know, “What idol am I guilty of worshipping?!”

Rabbi Leff explained, “Hashem has decreed that you must eat on Yom Kippur. If your doctor has given you instructions, then this is the decree from Hashem. If some other god has commanded you to fast, it is irrelevant to me if you call it Zeus, Kemosh, or Yom Kippur, all idols are the same.”

The man softened and understood what Rav Leff was telling him. Rabbi Leff added, “We learn from Hillel that just as it is a Zechus to feed a guest, it is also an act of Chesed to give sustenance to one’s own Neshamah, because the Neshamah is

the guest in one's body. The way for you to take care of your Neshamah is to listen to your doctor, and not do some foreign service that will put your life at risk. That has no place in Yiddishkeit!"

Reprinted from the Yom Kippur 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U' Tefilah.

Everything is from Hashem



Torquemada, leader of the Spanish Inquisition

Sefer Shmuos V'Sipurim (Chelek 1) relates the following:

After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, many Jews remained there and maintained their Judaism in secret. Anyone who was caught doing this was sentenced to be burned at the stake in the middle of the city.

One time, a minister was caught practicing Judaism in secret. The priests arrested him and sentenced him to be burned. This minister was beloved by the king, and although the trial of Jews was the domain of the priests of the Inquisition, and not the monarchy, the king asked that the burning be postponed for a year so that there would be time to find a replacement for the minister. The priests agreed to this request. A year later, the king asked to postpone the decree for another month, when the month passed, the king asked to postpone it for another week, and a week later, he asked to postpone it for another day.

When the designated day arrived, it was announced throughout the city that the minister would be burned today. All the townspeople were invited to watch the

spectacle. On one side of the street stood all the spectators. On the other side, the pyre was set up where the burning would take place. Suddenly, the earth shook – it was an earthquake! The entire crowd of people began to run away, with many of them getting trampled and killed. The minister managed to escape in the midst of the commotion, and the king covertly helped him escape Spain.

This minister was a thinker and philosopher. He began to investigate whether the miracle that happened to him during the earthquake was a coincidence. He wondered if meteorologically there was supposed to have been an earthquake in that place anyway, and it was just by coincidence that he was about to be burned at the stake at that moment, or whether this earthquake was specially sent by Heaven for him to save him.

He decided that if his investigations determined that it was just a coincidence, he would continue to be a Jew only in secret, but if it turned out that the miracle was performed specially for him, then he would practice Judaism out in the open, especially since he was already out of Spain.

During the course of his investigation, he spoke with all the Ashkenazi scholars but he did not tell them that he himself was the minister; rather, he said that this had happened to “someone he knew”. Each of the sages told him that, in their opinion, it was an open miracle, but he was still not satisfied with their words. Then he heard about the Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh and decided to travel to him.

When he came to the Baal Shem Tov’s town and entered his courtyard, he saw a man standing in the courtyard, tending to the horses. This was Rav Wolf Kitzes zy”a, one of the Besht’s leading students. The minister asked where he could find the Besht and Rav Wolf led him to the house. As soon as he entered, the Besht said to him, “Shalom to you, Minister So-and-So of Spain.”

The minister was amazed that he knew who he was and he realized that he was in the presence of a holy man.

The Besht then said, “As far as your question, it will be answered by my students who you saw tending to the horses.”

Rav Wolf told him, “Even if it would be true that the earthquake was a natural phenomenon that was decreed during the Six Days of Creation, the fact that you were taken out to be burnt at that exact time and in that exact place so that you could be saved by it is a sign that your salvation was miraculous.”

The minister accepted these words as the truth and he committed to practice Yiddishkeit openly, becoming a talmid of the Besht.

Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5785 email of The Way of Emunah: Collected Thoughts on the Weekly Parshah from Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum.

Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller, zt"l



**Tombstone of Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman
Heller in the Remah Cemetery**

Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller had a limp. But even so it never stopped one of the wealthy Jews to take him for a son in law for his daughter. Once during the engagement the Chassan came to visit his future father-in-law. During his visit his father held a dinner for a high officer. The officer made fun of the man for taking a son in law that was limping.

But the man wasn't bothered and replied that one day he will see the greatness of the young man Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller had a limp. But even so it never stopped one of the wealthy Jews to take him for a son in law for his daughter. Once during the engagement the Chassan came to visit his future father-in-law.

When the officer started speaking he noticed that Reb Yom Tov Lipman had fallen asleep. So, he mentioned in his speech how the young groom had fallen asleep. After his speech he turned to the Chassan and said, "Can you repeat my speech?" The Tosfos Yom Tov started repeating the speech word for word in a language he didn't even know. In the middle of repeating the speech he added, "Look how the groom is sleeping during my speech."

It was then that everyone realized the young Chassan was a genius and although he never understood a word he still managed to repeat it word for word.

On one occasion he led a Din Torah (Jewish court case). When ruling in favor of one party the other party was very angry. So much so they went to the Kaiser and told him that the Tosfos Yom Tov was challenging the authority of the king and even called one of his books as a king (Maadanei Melech). The Kaiser was so angry that the Tosfos Yom Tov was arrested, taken to Vienna where he was tried for rebellion against the king and was sentenced to death.

The Tosfos Yom Tov had a son who was studying in the Yeshiva in Frankfurt and decided to come home to visit his father. He was walking with friends near Vienna when a French officer passed them in his wagon. The officer was wearing a red uniform. Just then a large ox approached, saw the officer in red and went wild. It was about to kill the officer.

The son of the Tosfos Yom Tov was very strong and managed to save the officer. The officer asked him how he could pay him for saving his life. The young man replied that he didn't want anything, he was happy to have saved the man's life. The officer told him to write down his name and if he ever needs anything he should contact him. As they entered Vienna the news reached the boy's ears that his father was arrested and sentenced to death. He immediately contacted the officer he had saved and asked him to try and help save his father.

As a result, the king changed the sentence and gave a very high fine instead. In addition, the Tosfos Yom Tov was forbidden to live in any city under the rulership of the Kaiser. He left to Poland where he was Rabbi in a few cities until he was offered to become the Rabbi of Krakow.

In Tach Tat (1648-1649) when the crusaders killed many Jews the Tosfos Yom Tov came out very strongly that the reason why the Yidden suffered so much was because they spoke in Shul during davening. The Tosfos Yom Tov made a special Mi Sheberach recited in many Shuls nowadays with great brochos for people who don't talk during davening. Many people who have undertaken to stop talking during prayers have witnessed major improvements in health, parnassa and lots more.

There has been many miraculous stories of people diagnosed with cancer and after undertaking not to talk during davening they had a miraculous recovery. May we all merit to appreciate the special gift Hashem gave us allowing us to daven, every day, three times a day and whenever we need. If we merit to appreciate this special gift and focus on our prayers we won't be interested in talking whilst busy conversing to Hashem.

Reprinted from the Parshas Shoftim 5785 email of Rabbi Dovid Caro's Inspired by a Story.

Rebbe Lev Yitzchak's Special Chassidim

By Rabbi Yehuda Z. Klitnick

The heilige tzaddik Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Bardichev had a loyal Chosid, a young man named R' David, who fell seriously ill that he was unable to do visit the tzaddik to receive a blessing for a Refuah. His friends, also devoted Chassidim of the Rebbe, had formed a strong bond between them, and decided that they would seek a remedy for R'David's health. They agreed to travel to Bardichev to find salvation by the Rebbe.

Upon arrival in Bardichev, they shared the purpose of their coming with the tzaddik, who listened intently and felt very sorrowful. After a few moments of thought, the Rebbe expressed that they should convey to R' David a blessing for his healing.

The Rebbe then instructed them to return home and share his exact words with him. Upon their returning, R' David was gratified to see his friends, and inquired whether the Rebbe promised that he be healed or merely offered a blessing. They answered that he only provided a blessing!

R' David encouraged them to return to Bardichev to ask the Rebbe to grant him a complete healing, rather than just a blessing. The Chassidim were convinced that their Rebbe had this capability, they willingly returned to Bardichev, and requested the Rebbe to grant a cure for their friend R' David;

After a few moments of thought however, the Rebbe did not deliver a promise that he be healed, and again only gave a blessing for a complete healing. R' David remained uneasy to only receive a blessing and called for them to come again. This episode occurred three times, each time they came to the Rebbe, he only gave a blessing.

R' David didn't lose his calm and begged his friends to try just one more time, and they obliged. This time it was a different scenario. The Rebbe didn't hesitate, on the contrary he instructed them to go to R' David and communicate that he would be healthy and strong, have a good livelihood, a son will be born to him, and he would find suitable matches for all his children.

The Rebbe bid them to depart Lechaim U'Lshalom. The Chassidim finally felt joy that the Rebbe had offered a promise! They noted the precise moment the Rebbe stated his holy words. Upon their return, they found R' David feeling somewhat better, already lying in bed.

When R' David heard the tzaddik's words, he felt happiness and renewed hope that he would soon recover, and they inquired when his improvement began, discovering it coincided the precise moment with the Rebbe's conversation. Thus, day by day, he grew stronger until he was able to rise from the bed and walk.

One day he told his wife he wants to visit the neighbors to request some food, and he went to a neighbor who, elated upon seeing him healthy, received him warmly and provided ample food for the whole household. The following day, he did the same thing, but to his astonishment, just before arriving at his friend's house, a young man approached him, expressing a desire to sell him a fox hide at a good price.

R' David, knowledgeable in this area, recognized that he could profit from it. He instead asked his friend for a loan to purchase the fox hide. The friend was more than glad to help. R' David sold the hide, and earned a significant profit. R' David had already gathered enough funds to purchase food and settle the loan for fox hide, so he pursued additional business ventures until he became quite wealthy, which allowed him to find suitable matches for his daughters. That same year, a son was born to him.

Once R. David had fully recovered, he visited the Rebbe to express his gratitude, who was delighted to see him. R. David humbly inquired the connection of being blessed with a prosperous livelihood and a son, with regaining his health! The Rebbe smiled and explained: "When your loyal friends first came to seek a remedy, their comradeships brought me great joy, yet there was no cure available. I approached the angel of livelihood on your behalf, and he consented due to their unity. The second time they came, I still found no cure, so I went to the angel of children and secured a son for you. On the third visit, without observing any cure, I appealed to the angel of matches, and they secured shidduchim for your daughters.

"Now I had three angelic endorsements. I cared for your need for livelihood, a son, and matchmaking, yet there was no cure available for you! But everything changed when your friends sought me out for the fourth time. This created immense joy in heaven, that ascended to the highest level. Such a bond of unity without boundaries was rare!

"Seeing this, I already had three angelic signatures in hand—livelihood, a male child, and proper matches—I approached the angel of life, presenting the signatures, and asserted that he too must sign for life, as provisions and support are granted to the living, and he agreed. Thus, I could assure you of life as a reward for the unity among your devoted companions.

Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Teitzei 5785 edition of Pardes Yehuda.

The Mother's Request to Speak

HoRav Yechiel Tzucker, shlita, relates a powerful story which sends a critical message concerning what should be our understanding of events to which we are “partial” (because we only see part) spectators. Darkei Miriam is an organization based in Yerushalayim, which, among its many chesed activities, also transports gravely ill patients of all ages, together with family members, to medical centers for required treatment.

One of its drivers, who do everything on a purely voluntary basis, related the following story. He first picked up a man who was seriously ill to be taken to a Hadasah hospital. Aside from his illness, or perhaps as a result of his illness, he was dealing with a host of other issues: economic, family, neighbor issues. When one is depressed, due to pain and fear of the future, everything appears bleak.

This man entered the car with his “baggage,” his laundry list of tzaros, troubles, and his “questions,” “complaints” concerning why Hashem would do all this to him. This is not unusual; in fact, it is more understandable than one who walks around with a perpetual smile, acquiescing to everything that he is experiencing. We are human, and such is a human reaction.

On his way, the driver received a call from a dispatcher asking him to pick up a mother and her very ill young daughter from an address in Meah She'arim. They picked up the mother and her three-year-old who showed signs of illness. The man continued his harangue about his miserable life and why Hashem would do this to him.

The mother listened patiently as long as she could. Finally, she asked “permission” to speak. “My daughter was diagnosed a year ago with a fast-spreading form of cancer. The only hope for recovery was to receive a one-time treatment which is the only such treatment effective for this dread disease. It must be administered within thirty days in order for it to be effective. Otherwise, it is worthless, and my daughter's life is in grave danger, since no other cure exists for this form of illness.

“We called the hospital, who said the earliest available appointment was in two months. We called around, spent every penny we had and that we could borrow; we used every ounce of protekizia we had, until finally we were granted a spot in twenty-seven days at 8:30 A.M. following eight hours of total fasting – not even water.

“Try explaining to a three-year-old girl that she cannot have her bottle of chocolate milk when she wakes up, or no cereal. It had to be done, and I was the “bad” mother who wanted her to live.

“My daughter did not understand the excuses. I had to hold on to her to make sure she did not grab food or water. At last, it was 8:00 A.M., and we entered the taxi on our way to the hospital. In a short time, she would once again be able to have her chocolate milk. My daughter, however, simply could not wait. She cried; she begged – but I was compelled to turn a deaf ear to her. It would only be a few more minutes.

“I turned my head for a moment, as the porter delivering breakfast to the patients walked by with her cart. In the flash of an eye, my daughter jumped up and grabbed a piece of bread and put it into her mouth! I became wild with fright, fighting with my precious little girl who was starving. I stuck my fingers into her mouth and dug out every crumb of bread! The people in the lobby that were watching me must have thought I was a deranged mother who was starving her child. Indeed, it was my quick actions that allowed her to receive the coveted and vital treatment.”

She looked at the man who had been complaining, and said, “You did not ask me how I could be such an unfeeling mother to put her fingers in her little girl’s mouth and grab every last crumb of bread, because you know the truth: it was for her benefit. We are little children, Hashem’s little children. He knows far better what is best for us. We have questions because we are unaware of the past and the future. He knows – and He knows best!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Teitzei 5785 email of Peninim on the Torah.

It’s Up to Me!

By Binyomin Pruzansky



Rabbi Binyomin Pruzanaky

Rav Karlinstein shared a story in Bnei Brak about an incident that occurred thousands of years ago, and a modern-day event that mirrored it.

The Zohar tells the story of how Rav Eliezer visited the home of Rav Yossi after he passed away. Rav Eliezer came with the *Chevra Kadisha* (burial society)

and knocked on the door, but the family didn't want to let him in. A young girl at the door said, "You can't come in; my brother won't allow it."

Rav Eliezer insisted, saying, "I must come in; I'm with the *Chevra Kadisha*." Eventually, they let him in. When Rav Eliezer entered the room, he saw Rav Yossi lying there, having passed away. His son was standing by his side, crying out, "Abba, Abba (Father, Father), I need you! You can't leave me. You're the only father I have!"

When Rav Eliezer saw the depth of the son's grief, he sensed that a miracle was about to happen—the power of this boy's tefillah was so great that it couldn't be ignored. Sure enough, a miracle occurred: *t'chiyas hamesim* (resurrection of the dead), and Rav Yossi came back to life.

Years later, Rav Karlinstein shared this story in a shul, and afterward, a young man approached him. "Rebbe, you told a story that happened 2,000 years ago, but such things still happen today. I'm an *Hatzalah* (emergency medical responder) member in Eretz Yisrael, and I witnessed a modern miracle. We received a call about an overturned vehicle on a highway. I raced to the scene, pulled a 10-year-old boy from the car, but it looked like his mother hadn't survived the crash.

"I put the boy in my car next to my young daughter. He wasn't religious, but he turned to my daughter and asked, 'Do you have a yarmulke? I want to pray.' She didn't have one, but she handed him a towel. He placed it on his head, ran back to the car, and stood there saying, 'Ima, Ima, I need you! Hashem, I need my mother! She's the only one I have in this world.'"

The *Hatzalah* member worked tirelessly on the mother, and after some time, he felt a pulse. They rushed her to the hospital, and after a few days, she emerged from intensive care. The young man's tefillah had saved his mother's life.

Sometimes we don't realize the power of our tefillos. But there are moments, like now, when we look around at the world's challenges, the fears on people's faces, and we understand what is at stake. Each one of us is fighting for *Klal Yisrael*. Each one of us has the ability to say, "It's up to me. My tefillah can make a difference." Whether it's for hostages or enemies approaching, our tefillos have the power to alter the situation.

We must believe in the power of our tefillos. If we enter Yom Kippur with this mindset—knowing it's really up to us—our tefillos will be different. They will be elevated, helping us reach the level of complete teshuva in our hearts. Hashem will hear our prayers, just as He heard the young boy's plea, and miracles will happen in our days as well.

May Hashem grant us a year of *bracha* (blessing), *geula* (redemption), and *hatzlacha* (success) in everything we do. Through unity and *achdus*, may we bring about the ultimate redemption

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Your Worst Enemy!

By Aharon Spetner



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

“Yabababa bum biddy bum bum bum...”

Berel the innkeeper sang to himself as he wheeled a large barrel of whiskey into his busy inn, stopping to straighten the simple sign over the door which read “Berel’s Inn”. A royal delegation from the king’s palace was due to arrive in the village of Horki and Berel needed everything to be perfect.

“Yankel,” Berel instructed his son. “Make sure that there are fresh candles in all of the rooms.”

“Yes, Totty,” Berel replied, hurrying off to replace the candles.”

Berel wiped down the bar counter and rinsed some pewter mugs. The sound of royal trumpets in the distance made him jump up. Berel ran outside to welcome the royal visitors, but was shocked to see them ride right past his inn. He ran after the entourage until they stopped at a building down the road. Berel noticed a new sign over the door: “Zanvil’s Deluxe Inn”.

“Zanvil’s Deluxe Inn?” Berel exclaimed. “But I’m the innkeeper in Horki! What’s going on?”

Berel watched in dismay as Zanvil rolled out a royal red carpet in front of the king's men, who disembarked their horses and entered the "deluxe" inn.

"Oh how could he do this?" thought Berel. "I need to come up with a plan."

Berel hurried back to his inn and sat down at his desk. He pulled out a piece of paper and a feather quill and started writing.

"Hmmm," thought Berel. "I could put up signs around Horki telling everyone that Zanvil's Deluxe Inn is full of rats... but wait - that would be sheker - oh I know! I can tell everyone about the time that Zanvil thought that whiskey was just apple juice with wine in it - that will make people want to come here for my quality schnapps. Hmmm... or even better, how about I put up signs telling people how Zanvil makes terrible scrambled eggs... Oooh so many good ideas!" Berel scribbled line after line about all the terrible things he knew about Zanvil. "He'll be out of business by the end of the week!" Berel laughed to himself.

As the rays of the setting sun cast a golden glow over the village, Berel, folded up his paper, put it in his pocket, and hurried to the Horki shtibel for mincha. After mincha, the holy Horki Rebbe got up to speak.

"In this week's parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu tells us of the mitzvah to remember what happened to Miriam when she spoke loshon hora about Moshe Rabbeinu. Now you have to realize that if the Torah didn't tell us that it was wrong for Miriam to have said what she said, we would not have even realized that it was loshon hora. That's how careful we have to be when we say things about another Yid."

Berel shifted uncomfortably in his seat, trying to think of why his situation was different.

The rebbe continued. "This is something we all need to be careful with. Imagine you have a business and your friend starts competing with you. Chas veshalom someone might now view this friend as their enemy because they are a threat to their parnassah. Maybe they'll start coming up with a list of terrible things to tell people about their friend so they won't do business with him."

Berel froze. Did the rebbe know?

"But guess what? That Yid is not your enemy! You want to know who the real enemy is?" The rebbe looked directly at Berel. "The real enemy is YOU! That's right, you think someone is your enemy because they are going to cause you to lose parnassah, but no no no, that's not how it works! Parnassah is from Hashem! Hashem is the one who decides whether your business succeeds. But now, because you decided to listen to your yetzer hora instead of to Hashem, you just became your own worst enemy - and the only person you're hurting is yourself!"

Berel sat shocked that he had fallen into the yetzer hora's trap. How could he have forgotten that Hashem is the one in charge and trying to hurt Zanvil would only hurt himself. As Berel walked out of shul, he tore up the paper in his pocket and threw it away.

“Reb Zanvil!” Berel called as he walked back towards his inn. Reb Zanvil turned around.

“Reb Zanvil,” said Berel, “congratulations on opening your inn! It should be with much hatzlocha! And if there is any advice I can give you on running your business, please don’t hesitate to ask.”

Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5785 email of Toras Avigdor Junior based on the Torah teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.

Strong Identity

The chossid Reb Michael Teitelbaum once related:

My father, Reb Chaim Moshe, dealt in logs and would travel by train regularly. As a young boy, I accompanied him on one of these long trips. When the sun rose and it was time to daven Shacharis, my father took out his tallis and tefillin and began to prepare himself.

The car was filled with noisy Russian peasants, but my father was completely oblivious to his surroundings. As he stood up to put on his tallis, the car suddenly fell silent. My father davened at his usual pace and during the entire time nobody spoke. As soon as he finished and sat down, the loud talking resumed. I of course shared my surprise with my father.

He later told me that when he first began travelling by train he consulted with the Rebbe Rashab [of Lubavitch – Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn, 1860-1920] At that time it was dangerous for a Yid to travel by train since it was common for hooligans to throw Yidden out of the door as it was moving.

My father asked the Rebbe if when he was davening on the train he should perhaps cover his tallis and tefillin with a coat and a hat.

The Rebbe replied, “If you won’t stand proud in your Yiddishkeit, of whom can we expect it?”

From that day on, my father davened on the train without embarrassment, and the goyim accordingly respected him for it.

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