

# SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS VAYISHLACH 5785

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## The Zechus (Merit)



Rav Asher Arieli of Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim is a legend. A son of Rav Chaim Yaakov Arieli, author of *Be'er Yaakov*, and a son-in-law of Rav Nochum Partzovitz, rosh yeshiva of Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim, Rav Asher delivers what is believed to be one of the largest daily shiurim (Torah lectures) in the world, attended by hundreds.

His Torah knowledge and hasmadah (diligence in learning) are matched by his remarkable anavah (humility) and self-effacement. In a moment of candor, a

talmid once asked Rav Asher in what zechus he merited such a well-received shiur and so many talmidim.

By all accounts, Rav Asher's shiurim are things of beauty, delivered with precision and comprised of masterful analyses and novella. Still, Hashem seems to have blessed Rav Asher with a shiur unlike almost any other in the world. What's the secret?

Rav Asher thought for a moment and, with utmost modesty, said, "I have wondered the very same thing. I have pondered this question of why Hashem gave me such a brachah (blessing). I believe the answer is as follows.

When I was a bachur, my friends and I, like all boys our age, received pocket money from our parents for expenses. The bachurim spent the money like others their age did. Some of it was saved up to buy additional sefarim, while in some cases it was used to buy food or even cigarettes... I, myself, decided to save my money to be used for taxis, so that I would not have to go on the public city bus, which would have exposed me to the sights and sounds of the street.

"Taking a taxi each time, I had to get around shielded me from viewing inappropriate things."

"I believe," said Rav Asher humbly, "that if I have a zechus to be blessed with such Torah wealth in the form of such a large number of talmidim and a shiur that is well received, it is in the merit of having safeguarded myself from those sights and influences in my youth."

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5785 email of Chayeinu Weekly. Compiled by Tzvi Schultz.*

## Inspired by Righteous People

The Baal Shem Tov was once fervently engrossed in his Mincha prayers in the forest when a wondrous phenomenon happened. All animals surrounded him, stood on their hind feet, and started davening to Hashem in their own ways. The Baal Shem Tov translated the passuk in Tehillim - my mouth shall speak the glory of G-d - and all other creations will be moved to daven and sing to Hashem.

This is alluded to in the passuk - Rashi says that even the animals, beasts, and birds were corrupt and sinned. We see that even animals and beasts become corrupt when people act corruptly. Conversely, when people serve Hashem through Torah learning and tefillah - praying, it brings out the good in all other creatures.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5785 email of The World of Belz.*

# That Cup of Coffee



## **The now classic Mishnah Torah Rambam Frankel Edition**

Rav Shabsi Frankel was a Holocaust survivor who moved to America, and he made it his mission in life to provide clarity on essential Torah texts to the Jewish People. Therefore, he invested a significant amount of money to employ a team of Talmidei Chachamim, who would research and examine the works of the Rambam. This team would compare different versions of the Rambam to make sure that the end product was the most accurate version available, and provide extra sources for further research.

Today, the set they published is known as the Frankel Rambam, and is a monumental contribution to the Torah world. At one stage in the research, Rav Frankel found out that the Cairo Genizah had a rare handwritten section of the Rambam for sale. Agreeing on a sum of hundreds of thousands of dollars, the sale was confirmed, and the rare, old manuscript was sent to Rav Frankel in America.

It was preserved in a casing, and when it arrived in his office, Rav Frankel carefully took it out of the casing for his researchers to examine. Each one was in awe at the new manuscript, and eagerly looked forward to a chance to inspect it at greater length.

However, a tragedy unfolded. As one of the researchers was making his way across the room to view the manuscript, he tripped. Ordinarily that would have been fine, but he was holding a cup of coffee at the time, and the coffee spilled all over the new manuscript! Since it was so old and fragile, the manuscript completely disintegrated, and it was now entirely useless.

This researcher feared the worst. He thought he would face some kind of punishment, or perhaps get sued, and likely be publicly embarrassed. Rav Frankel calmly exited the room and said nothing. He returned a minute later holding a cup

of coffee and simply remarked to the embarrassed researcher, “I noticed you spilled your coffee. Here is another one.” And that was it. The episode ended there!

Years later, when Rav Frankel passed away, his team of researchers came to see the family during Shivah. The researcher who spilled the coffee told this story to the family, and he was shocked to find that nobody had heard about it before.

Not only did Rav Frankel have the self-control to not snap at this researcher for his mistake, he restrained himself from ever telling anyone about the incident, even his own family! He learned from this that sometimes one can achieve a lot by speaking up. But sometimes one can achieve a lot more by knowing when not to say something!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

## The Power of Embarrassment



**The Bais Yisroel and the Kapischnitzer Rebbe**

The Bais Yisroel of Ger, Rav Yisrael Alter, zt”l, was once walking through the old cemetery in Teveria, when he stopped by the Kever of Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, zt”l, the Kapischnitzer Rebbe, and he told this story:

A woman came to the Kapischnitzer Rebbe, and with tears in her eyes she asked for a Brachah. She was very ill, and she begged the Rebbe to give her a Brachah that she would recover.

The Rebbe gave her a Brachah, but she wasn’t satisfied. She cried, “Promise me that I will recover!”

The Rebbe replied, “How can I promise that you will get better?”

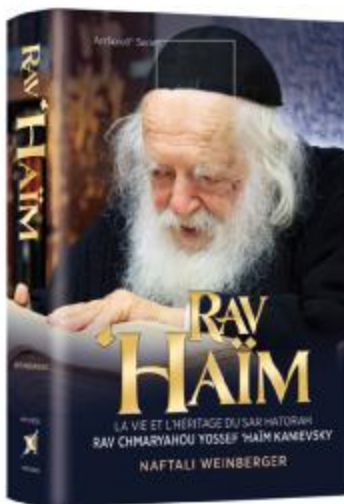
But the woman would not back down. She said, “I will not leave until you guarantee that I will get better and recover!” The Rebbe saw that the woman would not give up, so he gave her a warm Brachah, and promised her that she would recover.

After the woman had left, the Rebbe said to his Chasidim, “If she recovers, I will be overjoyed, but if she doesn’t, it will be an embarrassment for me. However, the important thing is that I calmed her down for the time being.

After a short while, the woman indeed had a complete recovery! The Kapischnitzer Rebbe said that it was due to her firm faith in Chachomim. The Bais Yisroel ended off the story and said, “But I say that she recovered in the Zechus of the embarrassment that the Kapischnitzer Rebbe was willing to go through, just to relieve the pain of a fellow Yid!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.*

## Has He Voted?



A fascinating story with Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt”l, took place on the day of the second round of elections in Yerushalayim one year. Early in the morning, a man who was suffering from Parkinson’s disease fell and broke his ribs. The patient was rushed to the hospital where the doctors had discovered that the broken ribs had caused a hole in the man’s lung, and he needed to undergo urgent surgery.

The patient's family approached Rav Chaim Kanievsky and asked for a Brachah (blessing) for the success of the operation. In response, Rav Chaim asked, "Has this man voted today already?"

The family members replied that the patient was already hospitalized and he was awaiting his procedure. Rav Chaim again asked, "Has he voted already?" The family members understood that Rav Chaim was giving them a message, and that he saw the voting in the elections as a necessity, despite the urgent surgery.

Therefore, they contacted one of the medical organizations in the area and asked them to send an ambulance to take this man to the polling station in order to vote. It took a few hours, and the patient was then returned to the hospital and was now ready for surgery.

Before the procedure began, the doctors took another x-ray of his lungs, as requested by the surgeon. The x-ray stunned the doctors. The hole that they had seen in the lung had disappeared as if it was never even there before!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

# **The Bodyguard**

**By Rabbi Yechiel Spero**

For the past few weeks Benny had been miserable. During recess, Eli, one of the bigger boys in their school in Efrat, would spend the entire recess period making fun of Benny in one way or another. Benny refused to make an issue of it, decided not to tell his rebbe or the principal, and made sure his parents didn't find out. He even went so far as to wait a moment before re-entering his school or his house in order to wipe away his tears. But one day he was caught.

## **The Bike Ride**

It was a beautiful spring day and Benny was eager to try out his new bike - an afikoman present. He rode his bike to school-what a ride! Sure enough, though, as soon as Eli saw the boy, he got onto his own bike and followed Benny, trying to make him fall off his bike. It was just too much; Benny came home, ran past his mother, sat down on the couch, and just cried.

His mother had heard him enter and noticed how upset he was. In fact, now that she thought about it, she realized that he had been anxious and edgy over the past few weeks, very unlike his usual demeanor. Not wanting to pry too much, she called to him from the next room, asking how his day had been. When there was no

answer, she walked into the living room and saw Benny crying his heart out over his Tehillim.

She assumed that one of his friends was ill, such was his anguish. “Benny,” she asked, “who’s sick?”

Benny replied that no one was sick, but the look of pain on his face told her that she had to find out what was going on, no matter what. He didn’t look away; instead, he collapsed onto the couch, and looked at the floor. “Benny, please tell me, what is it?”

Benny’s eyes were red and swollen; he had held the pain in for a long time and now finally he was letting it all out. “Mommy, I am not praying because someone is sick. I am praying because there is a bully who keeps picking on me in school. So, I am asking Hashem to be my Bodyguard.”

### **The Ten-Year-Old’s Emunah Peshutah**

His mother was at a loss for words; she felt terrible that she had not known about the bully who was ruining her son’s school year. But she was even more amazed at her 10-year-old’s emunah peshutah. He had a problem and was turning to Hashem to be his Bodyguard. It was really quite amazing.

She hugged Benny and told him that everything was going to be all right. And then, as soon as she left the room, her son went back to his praying, so she picked up the phone and called her next-door neighbor, Chaya. Chaya was a trusted friend who viewed her friend’s family as her own. She had not been zocheh to have children of her own, and because of that she took special joy in her friend’s simchos. In just a few moments, Chaya arrived at her friend’s apartment. She walked up the stairs quietly and watched from the doorway as the “adorable” 10-year-old poured out his heart and prayed that Hashem should protect him.

Then, Chaya stepped into the room and asked Benny if she could speak to him for a minute. Benny stopped what he was doing and looked at the woman who was like his second mother. She told him that she had heard about the bully in school and felt terrible that he was in so much pain. But she just wanted a small favor. Could he have her in mind as well? She had been married for seventeen years and had never been blessed with a child. “Could you ask Hashem to be my Bodyguard as well?”

Benny wiped away his tears and smiled.

Within a few days Eli stopped bothering Benny.

Amazingly, within one year’s time, Chaya became a mother.

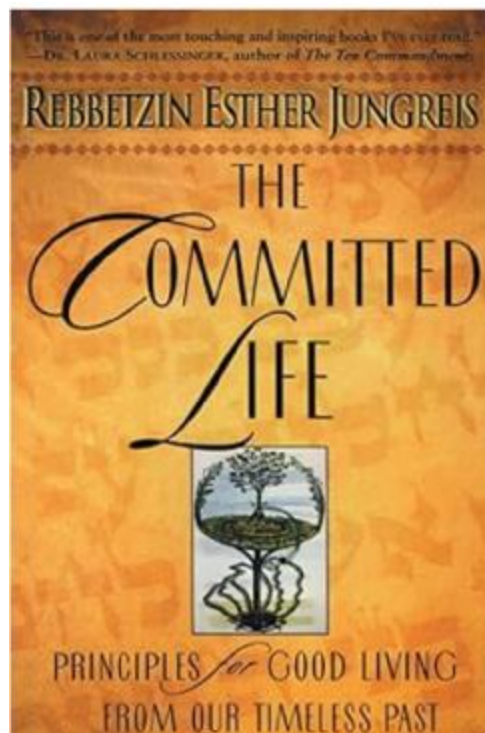
There was no doubt in her mind whom she had to thank.

Benny and his Bodyguard.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Noah 5785 email of Rabbi David Bibi’s Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace. (Excerpted from the ArtScroll book “Touched by a Prayer.”*



# The Rabbi's Request To the Assimilated Jew



Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis told an amazing story in her book *The Committed Life*, about a speaking tour that she was on in Israel. She needed some musicians to accompany her, and out of nowhere, she was approached by a few yeshivah boys who offered their services. She asked them how they knew that she needed a band. The leader of the band answered, “Actually, we didn’t know, we just wanted to help.” With that, he began to tell his story.

“A few years ago, when I was living in New York, I was totally assimilated. I had no understanding of Judaism. My life was music, and I was on my way to Paris to continue my musical studies. I was walking on Kings Highway in Brooklyn when suddenly I heard a crash and the screech of brakes. I looked up, and there in the street, covered with blood, was a Rabbi who had been run over by a car.

“I rushed to his side and tried to talk to him, but he didn’t respond, so I stayed with him and held his hand until the police and an ambulance came. As he was lifted onto a stretcher, I noticed that his lips were moving. It seemed like he wanted to tell me something. I leaned down and bent my ear close to his lips so that I might hear



him. Rebbetzin, you'll never believe what the Rabbi said to me." For a moment, the young man paused. Then he swallowed hard and continued with his story."

"Son, are you Jewish?" the Rabbi asked me. 'Yes, Pop,' I answered. 'I am Jewish.' 'Son' the Rabbi whispered again – although it was obvious that it was very painful and difficult for him to talk. He mustered all his strength and said, 'You must go to Jerusalem and study Torah.'"

"Can you imagine? There was this Rabbi, suffering from multiple fractures, his body bloody and bruised, and in his pain what did he do? He told me to go to Jerusalem and study Torah! That experience changed my life. I realized that I had met a saint, a man who was so committed to his faith that he was able to overcome his suffering to reach out to me. So now you know why I'm here. The Rabbi changed my life, and I want to give back."



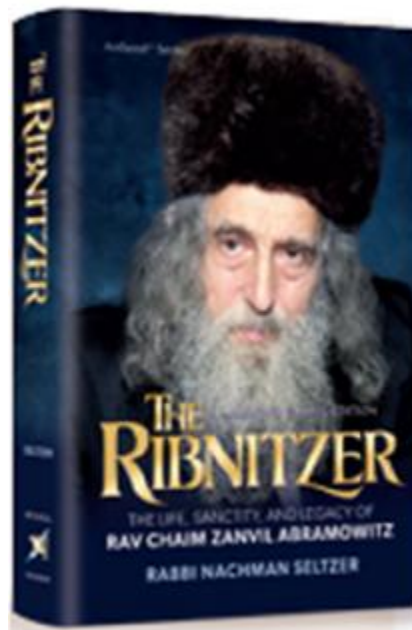
Rebbetzin Jungreis listened to his story but had difficulty answering him. She recognized that story; she knew it well because that Rabbi was her father. When he recovered from that accident, he told his children of the incident and asked that they try to find the young man to thank him for his kindness, for staying with him until the ambulance came.

They never did find him, but now, years later, here in Jerusalem, he came to offer his services in gratitude to the Rabbi, and the Rebbetzin was able to thank him in the name of her father. We see from this story how the Rabbi reached out to another Jew even in an incredibly difficult time and was able to bring him back to Judaism.

*Reprinted from Parashat Noah 5785 email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

# The Crazy Man

By Rabbi Nachman Sletzer



While the Rebbe spent his younger years learning for many hours every day, as the years passed, he stepped into the role that had been set aside for him by Hashem — acting more and more as the spiritual guide and leader of the Yidden around him.

In addition to everything else that he did for his fellow Yidden, the Ribnitzer made the rounds of various towns and villages for the express purpose of performing shechitah, ritual slaughtering of animals and fowl, and providing local Jews with kosher meat.

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One petitioner found out that the Rebbe had a feather-removing business. He asked a few questions and learned that the Rebbe defeathered the chickens that he slaughtered for the ridiculously minimal charge of ten kopeks. The man was taken aback and asked the Rebbe why he didn't raise his price. Doing a time-consuming job such as defeathering a chicken for ten kopeks was basically doing it for free. "You don't understand," the Rebbe explained. "The only reason the Yidden even bring me the chickens to shecht in the first place is because they know that I will take care of the feathers. That's the reason I offer the service in the first place — so

that they will bring me the chickens to shecht, and I will be able to ensure that they eat kosher chicken.”

Shechitah was expressly forbidden in the Soviet Union, and in the years after the war and for decades to come, the KGB did their best to catch any The Rebbe managed to slaughter animals for years without being caught, but there came a day when the KGB caught him red-handed. The soldiers who arrested him joyfully pointed out what lay ahead for the Rebbe who paid them no heed.

### **Caught Site of the Frozen River**

As they traveled down the road toward the local jail, the Rebbe caught sight of a river, and, turning to his captors, he made a request. “Could we stop for a few minutes?”

The soldiers were utterly taken aback to see that their prisoner had the nerve to talk to them, let alone make requests. “Why do you want to stop?”

“I see a river and I would like to immerse in it.” The soldiers couldn’t get over the Jew’s request. In truth, it was hard to comprehend anyone sticking their toe into the frigid waters, let alone his entire body. Just thinking about the idea of their prisoner doing such an outlandish thing sent the soldiers into spasms of laughter. “You know what?” they said, when their laughter had subsided. “If you want to go swimming in the river, we won’t stand in your way.”

So, saying, they stopped the car and let him out on the riverbank. They watched as the Rebbe made his way down the bank and over to the river, which was completely frozen over, with no visible point of entry. Every breath that the soldiers took froze in the air as soon as it was out of their mouths. Yet to their amazement, the Zhid wasn’t fazed. The Rebbe began pounding away at the ice with a branch that he found, trying to crack a hole big enough for him to slide into, while the soldiers watched, openmouthed. None of them had ever seen anything like this before, and they knew they would never forget the incredible sight of a Jew hacking away at the ice so that he could take a dip in the river.

Suddenly, one soldier turned to the other and said, “This man is no cattle slaughterer. He’s out of his mind!” Turning to the Rebbe, who was making inroads with the ice, they yelled, “Crazy man!”

They promptly returned to their vehicle and drove away, leaving the Rebbe in peace to immerse in the icy river to his heart’s content. Then he left the river behind and returned to the town where he had been before his arrest, picked up his knife, and continued with his holy work. Yidden needed kosher meat, and there was no time to waste.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5785 edition of the At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “The Ribnitzer” by Nachman Seltzer.*

# One Mitzvah Leads To Another

By Rabbi Hanoach Teller



The traditional blessing for one who engages in a mitzvah is to wish them the merit to perform additional mitzvos. Here is a story of how such a blessing was earned and fulfilled.

Some background: Just as Judaism prescribes that a marriage may only be established under the strictures of Jewish law; likewise, a marriage can only be curtailed via a divorce document (get) [other than death] arranged by a knowledgeable rabbinic authority and beheld by two kosher witnesses.

Because of the calamitous consequences that can result from a couple that is divorced civilly, but lack a proper get, m'sadrei gittin (the rabbis who arrange a get) go to great lengths (occasionally even heroics) to fulfill their mission. The name that immediately comes to mind is that of Rav Nota Greenblatt, zt"l, from

Memphis who was oblivious to comfort (even in his extreme old age) in his quest to ensure that halacha was upheld.

Accolades to Rabbi Avi Lebowitz his disciple in this realm, who is proving to being Rav Nota's worthy (albeit inimitable) successor.

Our story takes place in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan in 2014. What?! You never heard of Sault Ste. Marie? The very town of legendary native American fur trapper Ozhaguscodaywayquay. If you never heard of her, that's probably because there are alternate spellings for her name: Oshawguscodaywayqua, Oshawuscodawaqua, Oshauguscodawaqua, and Oshawguscodywayquay. Later, mildly contracted to Susan.

In this one zip code town in Michigan's Upper Peninsula lived a gentleman who was amenable to issuing his wife a proper halachic divorce, but he was not agreeable to make the half-day journey to Milwaukee for this purpose. Perhaps the reader will begin to appreciate the onerous travel burden m'sadrei gittin must endure.

### **Happy to Fly for a Mitzvah**

Rabb Mendel Senderovic, who would officiate at the divorce, had an idea. He turned to Alex Goldman who owns a time share in a circa 1976 Cessna one propeller plane. The journey by air was only one-and-a-half hours each way. Alex, a third-generation pilot, was happy to fly for a mitzvah.

He cautioned Rabbi Senderovic that the weather forecast toward the end of the apportioned day was iffy for a small plane, and accordingly Rabbis Senderovic, Dovid Begoun (who would serve as a witness (in case there weren't any kosher witnesses readily available to be snagged in Sault Ste Marie)) and Alex, who would serve as the second witness, took off bright and early. This would have to be a "get-and-run" for the weather – which Alex was constantly monitoring – would turn toward evening. Seeing the sights of Sault Ste Marie would have to wait for a different trip.

### **The Soon-to-be-No-Longer Married Man was Waiting for Them**

Alex touched the plane down on the one and only landing strip, and the soon-to-be-no-longer married man was waiting for them. There was no mistaking who he was for this was a no-frills airport: sans tower, ground control even a refueling pump. Thank G-d, Alex-The-Boy-Scout-Goldman, had tanked up with enough fuel to enable a return flight.

The four of them relocated to the pilot's hut and Rabbi Senderovic got right to work. Meanwhile, the Sault Ste Marie airport was having a busy day. A modern Beachcraft Baron 58 twin engine just landed and was taxiing toward the hut as it

sneered past the single-engine Cessna 172. The plane came to a halt and a man and a woman alighted.

### **Astonished at the Sight of the Three Distinctly Religious-Looking Men**

Rabbi Begoun could barely believe his eyes as he saw emblazoned on the woman's sweatshirt "Michigan" in Hebrew letters. The couple was even more astonished at the sight of the three distinctly religious-looking men congregated on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. If ever there was an opportunity to "bagel" this would have been it, and the gentleman said the only Jewish word he could think of, "Good yuntif."

"Ehh, what are you guys doing up here?" Mr. Beachcraft Baron questioned, unable to conceal his incredulity.

"We are here to perform a ritual divorce."

"Hey, I just got divorced."

"Were you and your wife," questioned Rabbi Senderovic looking up, "both Jewish?"

"Yep."

"Did you give her one of these?" the Rabbi queried, pointing to the document.

"Nope."

### **"Sit Down, Your Next!"**

This time, without looking up, Rabbi Senderovic commented, "Sit down, your next!"

The return flight was delayed and from what Alex could tell they were going to have to divert from Timmerman Field Airport as a dense fog was rolling in over Lake Michigan. Alex did not wish to do an instrument approach and kept communicating with ground control who assured that the airport was still clear. That sure wasn't what Alex was seeing.

Night fell across the sky like a curtain, and for the encore dark clouds blew everywhere, snuffing out the stars dozens at a time. A storm had coalesced, jagging the sky with bad electricity. And yet, the tower kept reporting that the clear weather was still holding. The plane's tank was on empty, and if Alex was going to divert, there was precious little time to implement an alternate plan.

Pilot Goldman dropped down and saw the threshold lights and chevrons directly ahead. The runway was remarkably dry despite howling winds and crashing thunder. The second they touched down, raindrops the size of small squids splat against the windscreen, followed by blinding rain. It was terra firma for the mitzvah performers, who completed their mission – two for the price of one.

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