

# SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS BALAK 5782

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## Truth on the Floor

By Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein, zt"l



Gavi, while enrolled in the yeshiva Neveh Zion, just wasn't finding it to be his thing. He had become more interested in Judaism over the years and thought he'd give it a shot for a year in Israel, but it wasn't going as planned. More than anything, he was growing more disinterested.

One morning, as Yosef, his roommate, looked over and saw the sheets pulled over Gavi's head, he gave him a gentle tap. "Gavi, what about coming with me today? We're learning Bava Metzia."

Gavi turned to his side, the obvious message being that he wasn't interested.

"C'mon, just try it once. Come this one day." With that, Gavi threw the blankets down, his hands resting on top.

"Alright," he said flatly. "Just once. Just today."

### **The Famous Second Chapter of Bava Metzi**

A short while later, Gavi was on his way out of the apartment heading towards the yeshiva alongside Yosef. Settling into the class, the rebbe began expounding the famous second chapter of Bava Metzia, all of which details the laws of finding, announcing and returning lost objects.

Gavi, never having heard this before, was keyed in. But he found it to be outlandish. "Who returns lost objects today?" he kept on thinking to himself. Eventually, his interest waned and patience grew short. And then he decided to pick himself up and walk out the class.

Yosef, later catching up to Gavi, asked why he walked out. "Did the rebbe say something wrong?"

"No, it's just that none of it is relevant!" Gavi shot back. "The whole thing is a waste of time. No one returns lost items nowadays."

"Gavi," said Yosef, "I get where you're coming from, but can I show you something? I'm heading into Jerusalem. Let's go together to the Zichron Moshe shul. There's something there I'll show you."

Gavi, not having anything particularly planned that day, agreed to go along. Once there, Yosef immediately got to the reason he brought Gavi. "Look at this, Gavi. Everything on this board is a lost item and the person who found it is trying to return it." Gavi looked through all the hung-up papers, some big, some small. "Found pen, found watch, found glasses ..." On and on, the list went.

### **Just Call the Finder**

"All you need to do is call the number of the item you lost, give the finder a sign that it actually belongs to you, and he'll return it."

Gavi was genuinely moved to see this, but it didn't do much more than give him a moment's pause, after which he went about the rest of his day as he normally would. Gavi didn't stay in yeshiva much longer. But neither did he go home. He headed to India. Immersing himself in his newfound Indian culture, he not only developed an affinity for the intriguing way of life, but grew close to one guru of a particular cult.

One day, as he walked the streets of New Delhi, India's capital, along with his guru, they came across a wrapped pile of money. Gavi, who at this point was going by a different name, turned to his guru and asked what he planned on doing with it.

"The heavens sent this to me. It is a gift from above. Today is a blessed day." But Gavi wasn't so sure about that. "Someone must have lost it," he went on. "It could be someone's pay from work that fell out of his pocket. Maybe we should try to track down who it belongs to and return it. There seems to be some scribbled name and number here that we can call."

But the guru remained firm. "If it fell before me, it must be the gods who are sending it to me."

### **Growing Confused by the Guru's Morality**

Now Gavi was growing confused. "We talk so much about morals and upright behavior. I don't understand why that doesn't apply here." The guru would not reply, and instead continued walking ahead, leaving Gavi standing still. To Gavi, this was the moment.

The moment he realized that Judaism, with its sensitivity and respect for others, was true. It was not "finders' keepers." That day was the beginning of Gavi's return back to Judaism. The truth of life had made its appearance that day to Gavi, in the form of money on the floor.

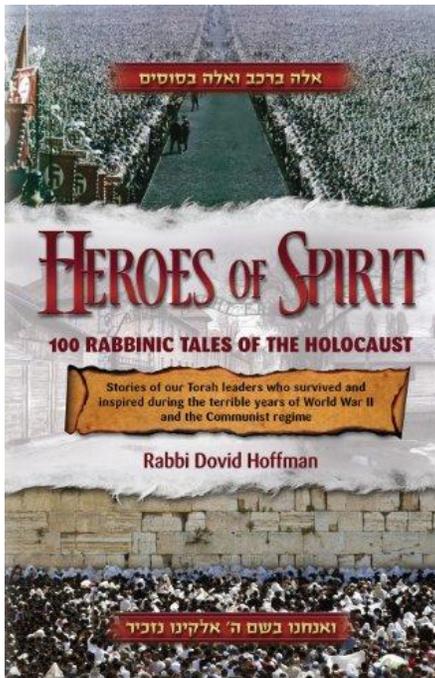
The one moment of sitting in class and hearing those words about returning lost items had remained with him for years. And it was those very few words which came back to redeem him later. We can never be sure when a moment will turn into a milestone. Time will tell. And when it does, the effects can be life-changing.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Korach 5782 TorahAnytimes Newsletter compiled and edited by Elan Perchik.*

# Trying to Rescue His Sister from the Gestapo

By Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

Living in a ghetto under the threat of Aktions, disease, deportations and starvation was a constant way of life for millions of Jews during the tragic years of the Second World War. Finding enough food to feed mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters was essentially a race to see who can locate and provide nourishment before the other.



One young boy lived together with his mother and sole surviving sister in the ghetto and his life revolved around seeing to it that they had enough to eat during those bitter days.

He would go out daily foraging until he could bring home his prize and his devotion to his mother and sister knew no bounds. He was prepared to risk his life for them.

In fact, he did just that. One day as he was returning home from a fruitful day of scrounging, a strange silence hung on the streets - the silence that followed death and Aktions. Running into his room, he discovered that it had been broken into, looted, and his sister, his one and only most precious sister was gone! She had been taken by the Gestapo, explained a neighbor quietly.

## Dashed into the Gestapo Headquarters

Without thinking, he tore out of the room and ran straight to the Gestapo headquarters! Bursting into the bustling office, he was met at the desk by a young clerk who was amused at the wild-eyed look of the teenage Jew. "What do you want here, Jew?" he asked. "To be shot on the spot? No problem." He unhooked his revolver.

"You took my sister," spat out the boy in an accusing voice which surprised even the Nazi.

“Really? Who’s your sister?” obliged the clerk who obviously felt used to responding to orders when they were made in a demanding voice. At this point, he motioned to another S.S. officer to come into the room and join him.

“My sister is the dark-haired girl you just brought in today,” replied the brother impatiently. “I want her back!”

The second German burst into laughter. “You want her back? What strange ideas Jews have these days. You know that when Jews come in here, they don’t usually go out!”

The clerk now joined him in laughing as the boy stood there defiantly.

### **“Give Me Back My Sister”**

Once again, however, he shouted, “Give me back my sister!”

This time, the second German, obviously a senior officer, stopped laughing and looked menacingly at the boy. “So, you want your sister back? Well, I’ll tell you what,” he said with a sneer, “when you will grow hair on the palm of your hand - I’ll let your sister go!” He continued to stare intimidatingly.

Unthinking, the boy opened his hand. Together, they all looked at the boy’s palm - which was covered with a tangle of black hair! The Nazi began screaming, “You Jewish devil! Satan! Take your sister and get out of here

before I machine-gun you both!” Hysterical, he ran into the next room and brought out the girl.

Instantly, the boy grabbed her hand and together they ran out of the Gestapo building, out of the ghetto and deep into the forest, where they hid from the Nazis for the duration. How did such a thing occur? Was it a miracle?

### **The Amazing Circumstances**

Much later, this Holocaust survivor recounted the amazing circumstances. “When I was a small child, I would help out in a factory in my hometown. One day, my hand got caught in a machine - it was a terrible accident. Somehow, the doctors managed to save my shattered hand and today I have full use and power of it.

Apparently, though, the skin that was grafted onto my palm came from a hairy part of my body and in my teens, hair actually began to grow on the palm of my hand. Doctors tell me today that this is impossible, but the palm of my hand did not go to medical school!”

Obviously, Hashem destined this young boy to protect and save his sister in a most miraculous fashion and he prepared the remedy even before the calamity. (Adapted and excerpted from “Heroes of Spirit”)

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

# Tachanun and a Wife's Chesed

By Rabbi David Bibi

Rav Biderman tells the following story: A Kotzker chassid once came to the Rebbe of Radoshitz zt'l and told him that his mazal fell, and he didn't have parnassah anymore. The Radoshitzer asked, "Do you say tachanun?"



The title page of the classic sefer "The Shaagat Aryeh"

Ashamed, he admitted that for many years he didn't say tachanun. "How many tachanuns are you missing? When did you begin skipping tachanun."

The man replied that he was still a young bachur when he began being lenient with tachanun. They made a calculation and realized that he was missing thousands of tachanuns. The Rebbe told him, "From now on, be cautious to say tachanun. Additionally, you must say all those tachanuns that you missed. If you will do so, your mazal will come back. But if you miss even just one tachanun that you owe, you won't get your yeshuah."

The man followed the Rebbe's advice. It took a few weeks, but he said all the tachanuns that he "owed," and he was careful to say tachanun in the tefillos. His mazal improved, and he became wealthy.

## The Power of a Righteous Woman

Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein tells a wonderful story of a woman who built her home in the proper fashion.

In Volozhin There lived a Jew named rabbi Isaac who aside from having illustrious ancestors, was also very wealthy and a leader of the community. He would travel on business to various Jewish communities and always bring his wife back a gift from his travels when he returned home.

Once his wife asked him to bring back a set of the Talmud, a very and expensive rare commodity at that time. Rabbi Isaac made the effort to fulfill her request and although it was difficult was able to obtain a full set of shas for her. His wife then established a lending library of sorts in her house and any scholar living in town or visiting town who needed to look up something would be able to come to their home and borrow it. When the scholar would finish with that volume, he would return it and take another one in its stead.

### **The Shaagat Aryeh Comes to Her Home**

Once the Shaagat Aryeh, Reb Aryeh Leib came to their home and asked to borrow a certain mesechta. When this woman saw that this outstanding scholar came to her home to borrow a gemarah, she told him that he should not exert himself to come to her home, rather that whenever he completed a volume she would send one of her servants to him with the next volume for him to continue his learning.

This arrangement was duly implemented, and continued until the rabbi had borrowed almost all of her volumes of the Talmud she had. When he left the city, he blessed the couple that Hashem should give her two sons. One who would teach the talmud to the entire Jewish people and the other who would be proficient in all of shas.

This blessing was for filled in this woman's two sons were none other than Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner and his brother Rabbi Zelmaleh.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Korah 5782 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*

## **The Doll on the Bed**

A number of years ago, an elderly Jew knocked on the door of Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman's apartment and asked to speak with the sage. He related that when Rav Aharon Leib was accepted in yeshivah, he was much younger than the other students. In addition to his young age, he was also short in stature.

The other students, who were older, resented his presence among them. As a result, they decided to ignore him and not volunteer to be his chavrusa, study partner. [While this may appear selfish and immature, yeshivah students took their learning and self-esteem seriously. They obviously felt that this "little boy's" acceptance into the yeshivah impugned their self-esteem.]

When they saw that Rav Aharon Leib kept on learning diligently and was not affected by their rejection of him, they decided to go one step further (or perhaps

backwards): they put a doll on his bed, intimating that he was a child who should be playing with dolls, not attending yeshivah. When a few weeks passed and the doll still lay on the bed, remaining in the same place, they realised that the young boy was such an incredible masmid, diligent student, that he never went to bed!

This transformed their attitude towards him. They accepted him. Who was the elderly Jew referred to above? He came to ask mechilah, beg forgiveness. Why? He was the one who had placed the doll on the bed.

*Reprinted from the Parahas Chukas 5782 email of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum's Penimim on the Torah.*

## Struggling to Understand a Tosfos

Horav Chaim Kreiswirth, zl, was a brilliant Torah scholar without peer. He was also an extraordinary ameil baTorah. He related that, while learning in Vilna, he had become stuck on a Tosfos.



Try as he may, he could not understand the commentary. He

reviewed it numerous times, to no avail. Finally, he decided to follow Chazal's directive to review one's lessons one hundred and one times – which he did. It took him an entire day and into the wee hours of the morning to complete this endeavour – all to no avail.

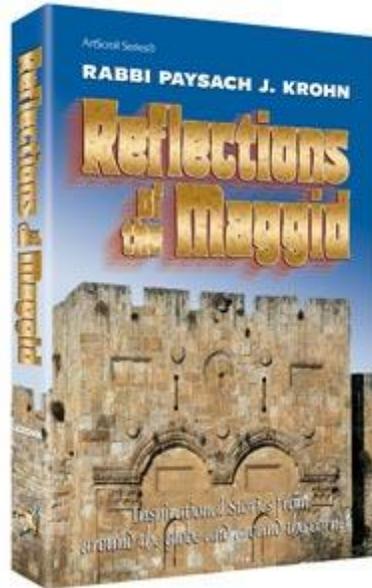
He became terribly frustrated and decided that he had no recourse but to go to the cemetery and pray at the grave of the Vilna Gaon. He would ask him to intercede on his behalf to understand the Tosfos. He went there and prayed his heart out. He accompanied his prayers with copious weeping until, out of sheer exhaustion, he fell asleep on the Gaon's grave.

A short while passed, and he woke up with a start. He thought for a few moments, and it all became clear to him. He now understood the Tosfos. This is a classic example of yegias baTorah, toiling in Torah.

*Reprinted from the Parashas Chukas 5782 email of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum's Penimim on the Torah.*

# A Time to Deliver

By Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn



**Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn**

Shimon Waller and his wife Shoshana had been married for seven years and had not been blessed with children. Their anguish was evident as they went from doctor to doctor, from medical facility to medical facility for advice and assistance. Rabbi Hillel Pincus, Rabbi of the shul where the Wallers prayed, counseled them and gave them support and assurance of Hashem's Providence throughout their ordeal. The couple found strength in his genuine warmth and concern.

Sadly, Shimon's younger brother Peretz and his wife Penina, who lived in the same neighborhood and prayed at the same shul, were experiencing the same painful situation. Peretz and Penina were married for five years but they too were without children. They too were brokenhearted and downcast, and Rabbi Pincus offered them, too, encouragement and reassurance.

In July of 1988 there was elation in the home of Peretz and Penina. After five years, they were going to have a child! They decided that for now they would not say a word about the pregnancy to anyone except their Rabbi, so that the older brother and sister-in-law who were married longer would not feel despondent. Rabbi Pincus was overjoyed at the news and impressed by their sensitivity for Shimon and Shoshana.

A month later Shimon called Rabbi Pincus and asked if he could meet with him. Rabbi Pincus told Shimon he could come whenever it was convenient. That evening both Shimon and Shoshana came to the Rabbi's home. As they began to talk they could not hide their radiant smiles. "Baruch Hashem, there is finally wonderful news," said Shimon. "My wife and I are going to have a child."

Rabbi Pincus was ecstatic and embraced Shimon with joy. "But I have a problem," said Shimon. "How can I share this news with anyone? It will surely get to Peretz and Penina and they might feel bad because of their own situation."

Rabbi Pincus thought for a moment and said, "Shimon, I know Peretz and Penina very well. They are special people and they love you so much. They will be thrilled to hear the news and he'll be so happy for you."

Shimon wasn't sure. "Do you really think we should be the ones to tell them?"

"Of course," said Rabbi Pincus. "You should go there right now and tell them."

Shimon and Shoshana took the advice and went straight to Peretz and Penina's home. Within an hour, Shimon and Peretz, brothers in every sense of the word, were on the phone together with Rabbi Pincus sharing their mutual ecstatic delight and good fortune.

*Reprinted from the ArtScroll sefer "Reflections of the Maggid.")*

# The Baby Saga

By Faygie Goldstein

For two and half long years, my daughter Ayala and Chaim waited for the *bracha* of children. There were many ups and downs along their journey. She had recently been told it might not be so easy for her because of a medical issue. This frightened her terribly as she had just lost two pregnancies, one after the other. Between battling the fear of another loss and daring to hope for their dream to come true, they were constantly riding a rollercoaster of emotions.

One day, Ayala and her sister, Racheli, were talking and trying to decide what else they could do to help her. Suddenly, Racheli had a brainstorm.

"Ayala, let's go to the *kever* of Miriam *hakoveset*, the washerwoman. You know her story, right?"

"She worked in the home for the *Rebbi of Zvil* and was barren for many years. She pleaded with *Rebbi* for a *bracha* for children. The *Rebbi* explained that if he blessed her with a child, he would live only to be a *bar mitzvah* boy. Miriam was

adamant that she wanted to have a child no matter what. It would be her *zechus* to help this *neshama* fulfill his *tikkun*.

The story goes on that after the *Rebbi* saw the greatness of this amazing woman, he then also gave her a *bracha* that she would be able to bring comfort and salvation to childless women. Any time that someone asked the *Rebbi* for a *bracha* for children, he would send them to Miriam. After she was *niftar*, women went to her resting place to *daven*.

### **Many Women Continue to Dave at the Washerwoman's Kever**

Word of this unique and moving opportunity was revealed and, to this day, many women flock to her *kever* to *daven*. It is a *nes* to see how many have been blessed with children. What a special woman! I really want to *daven* there!"

"Let's go tomorrow. We should do this as quickly as we can."

"Okay. *Be"H* tomorrow sounds great."

As planned, they went the next day.

When Ayala arrived home that night, she wasn't feeling well. On a whim, she decided to do a pregnancy test. She felt sort of silly. She had only just *davened* at Miriam's *kever*, but something spurred her on.

You guessed it. The result was positive. She called me and we cried, laughed, and cried some more. Of course, it was to stay an official secret for the next three months, but our gratitude and joy overflowed.

But this is not even close to the end of the story ...

### **Ayala's Due Date was Approaching**

This was it! Ayala's due date was approaching. All the heartache and longing of the last two years were coming to an end. No more sad looks from well-meaning family and friends. She was going to enter the club of motherhood any day now. Her happiness bubbled over. Even though at this time, the Coronavirus was wreaking havoc in the world, she chose to remain optimistic and was extremely careful to stay as safe as she could. To say that she wasn't worried at all would have been untrue, but her *emunah* was steadfast.

As the time came closer, she and her husband came to stay in my home, although she was had about two weeks to go.

Yom Kippur was in two days, and she just wanted to be sure that she was with her family in case something happened early. Good thing she did! On *erev* Yom Kippur she had to go to the hospital to be checked, but they sent her home. As the fast came in, Ayala started having stronger contractions. We decided to wait a bit more. Due to Corona and my health issues, sadly, I was not able to go with her. One of my daughters was going with her instead. As her contractions progressed and we saw there was no choice, I hugged her tightly and sent them on their way.

It was a very emotional day between my physical situation, worry for my daughter and the situation with Corona. My tears fell non-stop. On the other hand, I felt grateful for all my *brachas* and very close to Hashem. I *davened* with a full heart for my close ones and all *Klal Yisroel*.

The time passed slowly, but finally the day ended. I turned my phones on and was rewarded with the wonderful news. Ayala had a beautiful baby boy.

Because of Corona, they would be coming home the next morning. Everything was waiting for their arrival, and I was dancing on air.

### **Beyond Emotional and Physical Exhaustion**

After they arrived and got settled, Ayala went to rest. She was beyond exhausted both emotionally and physically. The next two days were a blur as we tried to help her care for her newborn. On the sixth day, my daughter started running a fever and coughing. We immediately called the doctor. He ordered a Corona test which came back positive. We all went into quarantine except my husband, who had this dreaded virus already.

Now we not only had a newborn to care for, but we also had a new mom who was ill with Corona. To say it was stressful and frightening was an understatement, but we all rallied together to do our best.

Time marched on and the *bris* was in just two days. Somehow, Hashem helped us get everything ready to go.

“Chaim,” I suggested to my son-in-law, “maybe we can have it in my yard with a *minyán* of men who had corona and at least then we can see from my window.”

“Great idea. Maybe it will make things a bit easier for Ayala.”

So, we went into fast forward mode and rearranged everything down to the *Kisei Eliyahu* which we borrowed from the shul nearby.

### **An Unexpected Medical Condition with the Baby**

The day of the *bris* dawned bright and sunny – an auspicious beginning. But when we were changing the baby’s diaper, I noticed some blood in his diaper. My heart sank. I checked his navel to see if it was from there and found nothing. I mentioned it gently to my family so as not to alarm anyone. We immediately called the doctor who saw his.

Although he thought it was unlikely that the baby had a urinary tract infection, he ordered an urgent urine test. All we could do now was *daven* and await the results. The test came back an hour later it was a UTI. The *bris* was off, and the baby had to go to the emergency room.

My son-in-law and my daughter, Racheli, rushed off the emergency room leaving Ayala home with me. There was no choice. She was forced to be separated

from her sweet child. The tensions was tremendous as we waited to hear news from the hospital, I looked for words to comfort my daughter.

“Ayala, you know I am here for you. I wish I could do something to make this easier.”

“Ima, we just need to *daven*,” my brave daughter answered.

A long silence fell, and we sat there, tears rolling down our cheeks, lost in our own thoughts and feelings. Finally, we got the call the baby was being admitted for a few days of IV antibiotics. My son-in-law and other daughters did rotations by the baby’s bedside. By the third day, the hospital let the baby come home for 8 hours so that he could be with his mother. On the fifth day, he came home. There was follow-up needed for the next few weeks, but, *B”H*, he was fine.

### **A Bris at One Month of Age**

Finally, at the age of one month, he had his *bris*. We had traveled a long hard road to get here, and our joy overflowed. He was given the name Shiloh Menachem – a name that had come to my daughter in a dream the day she found out she was expecting. It was a beautiful name for a precious *neshama*.

Through all of these trials, this special couple never lost their positivity. They found ways to cope with each challenge. Today, Shiloh Menachem and his amazing parents are flourishing. May we all see *nachas* and Hashem’s kindness in all His ways.

*Reprinted from the June 26, 2022 website of The Jewish Press. It was published in the newspaper’s*

# **Summer of Opportunity**

**By Rabbi Shimon Finkelman**

It happened almost fifty years ago. The place was Camp Torah Vodaath and the event was the Color War All Star Game. Held on the main baseball field in the center of camp, it was attended by virtually the entire camp population. It was late in the game, the score was tied, and the excitement was palpable.

Benjy, a senior camper and possibly the best player on his team, was on second base, the potential winning run. The batter hit a single to the outfield and Benjy tried to score. It was going to be close. Benjy slid into home ... and the umpire called him safe! The cheering from Benjy’s team was deafening.

After dusting himself off, Benjy, all of 15 years old, walked over to the umpire at home plate and said quietly, “I was out.”

The umpire was stunned. “What do you mean, you were out? I watched the play very closely and I called you safe.”

“I know,” Benjy responded, “but I am 100 percent sure that he tagged me before I touched the plate.”

By now, everyone understood that something was going on. Benjy should have been smiling from ear to ear, enjoying the back-slapping of his teammates. Instead, he was in earnest conversation with the umpire.

### **A Case Unique to Bnei Torah**

The umpire needed a few moments to think. This was not something that could be found in the Major League rule book. It was a case unique to *bnei Torah*.

Finally, the umpire said, “I really thought you were safe, but if you’re absolutely sure that you were out, then I guess you’re out.”

The game ended in a tie. As I recall, no one on Benjy’s team became upset with him. They understood that he had done what he knew was the right thing and they respected his decision.

On the last night of camp, the head counselor told everyone, “A lot happens in a summer at camp. But if there is one thing that you must take home with you, it’s what Benjy did in the All Star game.”

Much has been written about how much a boy (or girl) can gain from a summer at camp, how children who don’t shine in school have an opportunity to shine on the ball field, on stage, in the arts and crafts room, or other areas of recreation.

There is more. Today’s camps run excellent learning programs, minus the pressure that boys sometimes feel during the year. The goal in camp is to learn, not necessarily to cover ground. There are boys who thrive in the more relaxed atmosphere, and sometimes this is a springboard for success in the coming school year.

### **Rav Yisroel Belsky’s Advice**

One summer, a counselor was hired to learn privately with a 13-year-old camper who showed little interest in learning. When the counselor asked the *mara d’asra*, Rav Yisroel Belsky, what to learn with the boy, Rav Belsky responded, “Teach him the basics of *hilchos bosor b’cholov* (meat and milk), and tell him that at the end of the summer, I will *farher* (test) him.”

This motivated the boy, and he learned that entire month with great *hasmadah*. Rav Belsky *farhered* him and was pleased with how well the boy knew the material. Rav Belsky asked that the boy visit him after the summer in Brooklyn so that he could present him with a handwritten “*semicha*” of sorts and have a picture taken with him. For years, that *bochur* kept the framed photograph of Rav Belsky and him on his dresser. And he continued to learn with great *hasmadah*.

*Reprinted from the June 22, 2022 edition of the Yated Ne’eman.*

# 19<sup>th</sup> Century European Continental Ivory Seder Group



This Judaica item comprised of five large scale carved ivory figures in medieval costume with a plaque in Hebrew declaring “It is the Passover of the L-rd” sold for \$22,500 in the 2013 Sotheby’s Auction in New York