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A Special Clock



After the Chozeh of Lublin, zt"l, passed away, his son, Rav Yosef, traveled to Lublin to receive his portion of the inheritance. The Chozeh left him his silken garment, a belt, and a wall clock.

On Rav Yosef's trip home from Lublin, the weather turned inclement. The wind blew fiercely and the rain came down in torrents, making it impossible to travel the dirt roads. Rav Yosef had no choice but to stop off for a while in the village he was passing through, and wait until the weather cleared before resuming his journey.

He entered the town and found a home with a Mezuzah on the door, where he knocked and was invited inside to get out of the rain. When the weather improved, Rav Yosef wanted to repay the Jew who had hosted him, for his kindness. He showed his host the garment, the belt, and the clock.

He said, “I don’t have any money, but I can offer you one of these items. They belonged to my saintly father, the Chozeh of Lublin. Please accept one of these holy items as a gift.”

The villager chose the clock. Sometime later, Rav Ber of Radoshitz, zt”l, happened to spend the night at this same villager’s house. The villager put him up in the room where the clock that had once belonged to the Chozeh of Lublin now hung.

In the morning, Rav Ber asked the villager how he had gotten that clock. When the villager explained where it was from, Rav Ber smiled and nodded. “When I heard the ticking of the clock,” he said, “I immediately knew it had belonged to the Chozeh of Lublin. The ticking of ordinary clocks informs one that the hour of his death is approaching, but the Chozeh’s clock ticks the joyous message that the arrival of Moshiach is drawing closer!

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5783 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefillah parsha sheet.

Oath for Life

By Avrohom Barash

Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna, the famed Vilna Gaon, was once accused of kidnapping a Jewish child who had been held in a monastery. The Jewish community fasted, prayed and pleaded with Hashem to have mercy. They begged for the release of the Gaon from jail, fearing what his punishment might be.

The false witnesses appeared in court and had their say; no evidence was produced to the contrary. The verdict was handed down finding the Rabbi guilty. “We give the Rabbi a choice of punishment,” said the judge. “He shall either submit to having a cross tattooed on his forehead, or he must be hanged!”

The Vilna Gaon shuddered at the first choice, which was not even an option for him. He would never consent to such a thing. The second choice was not displeasing to him; he rejoiced at the opportunity to give his life al kidush Hashem, in sanctification of G-d’s Name.

His thoughts were interrupted by the judge’s next words. “However, if the Rabbi is prepared to take an oath denying the witness’ testimony, the court will accept his word and drop the charges.”

The Vilna Gaon had always been careful never to swear, out of fear of taking Hashem’s name in vain., but he realized that he must now do so in order to save his life. He swore that he was telling the truth and was indeed innocent, and was released.

His prime disciple, Rav Chaim of Volozhin, related the episode along with his interpretation of why such a thing had come to pass. It was ordained by heaven that he should undergo such an ordeal, because the Vilna Gaon had fulfilled every possible misvah in the Torah in his lifetime, except for that of swearing in Hashem's Name. Due to his lofty level, it was deemed proper for him to fulfill this command with no concern that any element of untruth would be involved, and thus would be put into such a situation. (A Mazeldig Voch, ArtScroll)

Reprinted from the Parashat Noah 5783 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

The \$3 Lottery Ticket



Rav Meilich Biderman once related a story. A man once borrowed fifty thousand dollars from a Gemach. He gave the Gemach fifty signed checks, for a thousand dollars each, so that the Gemach would be guaranteed payment.

However, he requested from the Gemach's secretary not to cash the checks. He said, "I will bring a thousand dollars in cash to the Gemach's office each month. Hold on to the checks for security, but please, don't use them. It will cause my bank account to bounce."

The secretary agreed. However, he apparently forgot about their arrangement, and he cashed the first check. This man discovered this when he was traveling home from a long trip. He was driving on the highway and stopped to fill up his car with gas. The gas station attendant tried swiping his debit card, but it didn't work. He returned it to the man and said, "There is no money in the account, sir, and your debit card was denied."

The man wondered, "How could that be? I just deposited a thousand dollars in the bank."

Then he understood that the Gemach must have used the check he left as a deposit, and that was why his account was empty. This left him stranded on the highway. He thought to himself, "Do I have to spend the entire night in the gas station, because the secretary accidentally cashed my check?"

A Suggestion to Check Card for Unexpected Cash

The attendant said to him, "I suggest you check your car. Sometimes people find money hidden in the glove compartment or under the seat."

The man followed this advice, and he found twenty- three dollars. He filled his car with twenty dollars' worth of gas, which would be enough to bring him home, and he remained with three dollars cash.

The attendant then said, "We're selling lottery tickets for three dollars each. Maybe you want to give it a try?" The man agreed. He gave the three dollars and bought a ticket. He started scratching off the numbers, and he was astounded to see that he won fifty thousand dollars! The exact amount he borrowed from the Gemach! He then understood that what he thought was a problem, was actually entirely for his benefit!

Reprinted from the Parashat Noah 5783 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

Far-Reaching Effects of an Expected Mitzvah

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser

Shmuel lived in Eretz Yisrael and was the seventh boy in his family. All his brothers had attended a major yeshiva, and it was expected that he too would attend that yeshiva when he became of age. Yet, although he had a solid reputation, Shmuel

was not accepted after taking the entrance exam. His parents tried to intervene, but with their limited connections they were unsuccessful in changing anything. Shmuel was understandably quite disappointed to have to follow a different trajectory than his brothers, who had lived at home until they married. He was especially let down when the only suitable yeshiva found was far from home and would require him to stay in a nearby dormitory.

Erev Shabbos of the first week at yeshiva, Shmuel was stopped by an elderly woman in the neighborhood, who wanted to know where he learned. When he informed her that he stayed in the dormitory for Shabbos, she told him that she hosted a weekly *shiur* for older men on Shabbos, and they were looking for someone to give a *shiur* in *Pirkei Avos* for one hour every week. She asked whether there was any possibility that he would be able to accommodate the group.

Overcame His Initial Inclination to Refuse the Offer

Shmuel curiously contemplated the situation, cognizant of the fact that his course in life so far seemed very different than that of his brothers'. He was inclined to refuse the offer, but then realized it was a unique opportunity to do a mitzvah and he agreed.

Shmuel began giving his *shiur* the following Shabbos and made a quite favorable impression on his group. As the weeks progressed, Shmuel diversified the *shiurim*, and the learning sessions covered topics in *Navi*, the *parsha* and the like. The participants eagerly looked forward to the *shiurim* as the highlight of their week. He was so successful that Shmuel continued to give his weekly *shiurim* for the next five years.

When Shmuel looked to get married, a *shidduch* was suggested with a girl from a very poor family. Once again, he felt he was getting a bad break. Unlike his brothers who had each married a girl of means and owned an apartment, he would have to rent a garage apartment in an out-of-the-way neighborhood.

The Woman Wanted to Give Shmuel a Special Wedding Present

The loyal members of the *shiur* were delighted to hear Shmuel's news that Shabbos and heartfelt *mazel tov* wishes resounded in the apartment. On *motzoei Shabbos*, the woman who hosted the *shiur* called Shmuel and asked to meet him with his *kallah* in person.

When they met, she explained that her husband had done very well in business, and she now owned several apartments in Yerushalayim. She noted that Shmuel had been giving his *shiur* all these years without any remuneration, and now that he was getting married, she wanted to give the couple a wedding present. This time Shmuel was overjoyed to be different than his brothers. Unlike his brothers,

Shmuel and his *kallah* were gifted with a beautiful, completely paid off apartment in the heart of Yerushalayim, with no monthly mortgage payments to make.

Our sages tell us that Hashem does not withhold the reward for the performance of the littlest mitzvah that one does in this world.

Reprinted from the October 27, 2022 website of The Jewish Press.

Correspondence with the President of the United States

By Nachman Schachter



Menachem Mendel Schachter was born in Rozvadov, Galicia, in 1890. Along with his brother, Yitzchak, and his father, Asher Anshel, he came to America in the early 1900s and settled in New York.

He married Sarah Kupfer in 1919 and in the ensuing years they had five children. Menachem Mendel was shomer Shabbos, as was the rest of his extended family.

In those days, this meant that it was almost impossible to keep a job.

Most business owners lived by the same credo: If you do not come to work on Saturday, you must look for a new job on Monday.

Menachem Mendel went from job to job, working Monday through Friday, only to lose each one when he failed to show up on Shabbos. It was a struggle to support his family; there were many times when he did not even have enough money to pay the rent.

A Business of Their Own

After the stock market crash of 1929, Menachem Mendel and Sarah finally hit upon a business that enabled them to support their family. They worked for a company that supplied them with the pieces of fabric for making neckties. Their job was to sew the parts together and return the finished products to the owner.

They were able to work at home and choose their own hours, so keeping Shabbos was not an issue. Not long afterward, however, the “cottage

industry” laws were enacted. These laws mandated that workers who produced goods could no longer do so from their homes; goods had to be produced in the workplace. The income that Menachem and Sarah had been able to eke from their tie business was soon to come to an untimely end.

Menachem Mendel was not deterred. He wrote a letter to the president of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In it, he explained, “I am an Orthodox Jew and therefore do not work on the Sabbath. I am unable to find employment because companies will not permit me to take off on my Sabbath. I finally found a business where I can make my own hours, and which enables me to support my family and still keep my Sabbath. However, because of this new law, I am not permitted to work from my house.”

Six weeks later, a letter arrived from President Roosevelt himself. It absolved Menachem and his family from adhering to that law, permitting him to continue making ties in his house.

The president ended his letter wishing him much success in supporting his family. The outcome of Menachem’s extra effort on behalf of Shabbos was certainly blessed by the One Above. - heard from Menachem Mendel and Sarah Schachter z”l, Brooklyn, New York

Reprinted from the Parshas Bereishis 5783 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book “Ten Steps to Eternity.”

Kindness in the Supermarket

A single mother of three young children was shopping at a kosher supermarket located in the tri- state area. Recently divorced, after her husband had walked out on her taking their bank account and savings with him, she was relegated to living off the government programs which provide support for the needy.

After ten years of marriage, her suspicions were realized when she discovered that her husband was an addict of sorts. To support his habit he needed money, which he took from his wife. When the issue of a get came up, he immediately acquiesced, wanting to get as far from the marriage as possible. That day, the woman filled up her cart with necessities, the basic foods that she would turn into nourishing meals for her three children.

According to her calculations, she still had a few hundred dollars remaining on her food stamp card. Thus, she was shocked when the reader informed her that her food stamp balance was zero. How was she going to pay the one hundred thirty dollars for her groceries?

Just then a kind-looking, well-dressed woman appeared. With a big smile, she said, “Here, let me lend you the money. You can pay me back whenever.” The woman handed the cashier her credit card to scan and disappeared as quickly as she had appeared.



As the act of kindness began to sink in, the woman reminisced about her life the last few years. Her husband had been considered a “good catch” until he fell in with other men of similar background who had fallen prey to the acceptable lifestyle of the secular society outside of the frum/yeshivah world. One thing led to another. At first, she had no idea that money was missing, that their checkbook balance was always coming up short.

Her Life was in Shambles

It was only after his ugly lifestyle became evident that everything began to fit in. Her life was a shambles, with no one to whom to turn. Her parents had been killed in an accident when she was but a child. She grew up as an orphan, raised by an aunt and uncle who were loving – but very controlling. The discipline was rigid and strict.

Introduced to her husband shortly after seminary, it seemed like a relationship that would blossom and bear fruit. At first it did, until her husband became addicted. What followed was a series of ugly disagreements and constant discord. Life now became two-faced: the congenial, happy confident face she presented to her children

and community; as opposed to her private, inner face – filled with turmoil and doubt, doubt in her faith and doubt in herself.

It all changed that afternoon when that kind woman reached out and announced that she was a person worth caring about. She now felt ready to move forward, to break the shackles of insecurity and self-doubt that had until now encumbered her. That woman did much more than give tzedakah; she saved a life, and, by extension, a family.

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5783 edition of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum's Peninim on the Torah.

Would Our Avos and Imos Be Accepted?

The director of a certain cheder in Beit Shemesh came to consult with Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman zt'l regarding the acceptance of children from a certain family into the cheder. Other parents in the school were pressuring the administration not to accept the children.

R' Aharon Leib was incredulous. "It is gayvah to insist that you are better than another person and to reject a child based on such haughtiness!" he exclaimed.

"But the father is acting crazy!" the principal countered. "He's using any and all means possible to push in the children!" "Other parents in the school also want the best chinuch for their children"

R' Aharon Leib countered, "Why isn't the principal calling them crazy? The parents pushing the school to not accept these children are full of gayvah!"

He then repeated several times, "Gayvah, gayvah, gayvah!" R' Aharon Leib continued, "With the criteria some schools are setting up today, even Avraham Avinu would not be accepted to a 'good' school! After all, he was the son of Terach, an idol merchant!

"Rikva Imeinu would definitely have trouble getting accepted as well, with Besuel for a father and Lavan for a brother! And our Imahos Rachel and Leah, daughters of Lavan the swindler, would not get accepted either. In fact, a good portion of our Patriarchs and Matriarchs would not be able to get into our schools today! In Brisk, when I was growing up, there was one central cheder for those who wanted a Jewish education - we all learned Torah together" (Reb Aharon Leib, Artscroll, p.151-152).

Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5783 parsha sheet of Rebbetzin Michal Horowitz's A Short Vort.

From Where will My House Come from?



The following story took place recently in Lakewood, NJ. It was heard from the protagonist himself: A man lived in a rented apartment with his large family, bli ayin hara. One day, the landlord informed him that he needed the apartment back in order to move in himself, and asked the tenant to please find a new place.

The tenant began to urgently look for another place to live, but it proved to be very difficult. Most of the apartments were too small for his large family; when there was a suitable one, he was unable to reach a satisfactory agreement with the landlord.

The man found himself without a place to live on the one hand, and the landlord, on the other, hounding him to get out of the apartment already. We are familiar with the words of Chazal (Pesachim 86b), “Anything that the baal habayis (i.e., the landlord) tells you, you should do, except ‘tzei,’ to get out.”

With No Other Choice

But this man had no other choice, because his landlord even warned him that if he was not out of the house by a certain date, he would simply remove the tenant’s belongings from the apartment and throw the whole family onto the street ... After extensive thought, the tenant decided that under the circumstances, he had no choice but to consider buying a new house.

He made some calculations and figured out that he could afford to pay up to \$410,000 for a new home. With this amount, he hoped to buy something spacious to accommodate his family. But after looking into it further, he discovered that he could not purchase a house of the size he needed for that price in Lakewood. Thus, he decided to look beyond Lakewood and made some inquiries in Jackson, the neighboring township. He found a house that was for sale; the owners were seeking at least \$400,000, but on the other hand, they wanted to sell it to the highest bidder.

The man immediately entered a bid for \$410,000 in the hope that the house would stay at that price and he could purchase it. This was the highest he could bid, as he could not afford more. A few days later, when he checked the bids, he saw that there were offers on file for \$480,000. Resigned, he realized that he could not realistically purchase this house, because the cost was too high and he withdrew from the bidding.

“Mazel Tov! The House is Yours!”

A few days later, he received a phone call from the agent of the Jackson house. Excitedly, the agent exclaimed, “Mazel Tov! The house is yours!” The man was taken aback and asked the agent in surprise, “I made the lowest offer, for \$410,000. After I checked and saw that there were bids for \$480,000, I withdrew. How is it possible that the house is mine?”

But the agent reassured him and said, “Relax. The house is yours and you have nothing to worry about.”

Well, this individual did everything but relax - he could feel that something was not right here, and he pressed the agent to tell him exactly how it came to be that the house was his if his bid had remained the lowest of all the offers.

The agent explained: The house belongs to a non-Jewish couple who filed for divorce. They went to court to settle their financial affairs. The judge decided that the woman was the owner of all the assets, and forced the husband to deal with selling the assets and transferring the revenue to the wife. But the man made every effort to deceive his wife, to ensure she came away with the least amount of money possible.

Therefore, he decided that he would sell the house, not for the most money, but to the lowest bidder! Because the woman had no idea what the bids were, as the court had tasked the husband with handling the sale, he could do as he pleased.

“Your bid was the lowest and therefore you got the house,” he was told.

Source: “Noam Siach” - sichos of R’ Shlomo Zalman Friedman shlita, Rov of Khal Zichron Elazar Santov in Lakewood.

Reprinted from the Parshas Chayei Sarah 5782 edition of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavlin.

Story #1299

Facial Recognition

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

editor@ascentofsafed.com

Some two hundred plus years ago, there lived a great chasidic master named Rabbi Mordechai (Mottel) of Chernobyl. Not only was he renowned for his erudition and holiness, he even had thousands of followers, many of whom he 'inherited' after the passing of his even holier father, Rebbe [Menachem-] Nachum of Chernobyl.

One time, Reb Mottel became so critically ill that he slipped into a coma. Soon he was hovering between life and death.

The Prayers of His Chassidim Succeeded

His Chassidim and followers were in distress. They gathered together, prayed and said *Tehilim* (Psalms) non-stop, and after four days it helped; G-d accepted their prayers. The Rebbe regained consciousness!

Several weeks later, when he had totally recuperated, they held a great thanksgiving meal for the kindness G-d had shown them. The meal was unusually joyous, replete with song and dance. Later on, one of the older Chassidim, who had taken more than a few *L'chayims*, mustered up the courage to stand and ask the Rebbe if he would please give a description of what he'd seen in the four days he was unconscious.

After a few minutes of pregnant silence, the Rebbe cleared his throat, closed his eyes and began to speak.

Brought Before the Heavenly Court

"I left my body and felt my soul rising, rising to heaven. I was sure that my time on earth had terminated. I was brought before the heavenly court and they were about to decide my fate. I protested that I didn't want to die. I cried and asked for mercy, but it didn't help.

In desperation I demanded that I be allowed to see my holy, departed father, Rebbe Nachum. I knew that if he could intercede for me, I might have a chance.

"My request was granted! My father was brought down from the highest heavens! We were face to face and I was bursting from joy to see him again after all these years, but he didn't recognize me!

"I pleaded; I tried to make him remember; but to no avail. He believed that I wasn't lying, but he simply didn't recognize me at all.

Finally, he asked if I had done some sin after he left this world and that is the reason he didn't know me. And then he disappeared.

"So, for three days, I tried to remember if possibly I had done something forbidden, even the most seemingly inconsequential act, but with no success. I again began weeping and praying and, behold, my father re-appeared!

Trying to Remember Anything Unusual

He told me that he also had been searching in the heavenly records, but he too came up with nothing. All he could conclude was perhaps it was something very small I had done, perhaps shortly before my illness, that was inaccessible to him. He asked me if I remembered anything unusual.

"Suddenly something came to my mind. It certainly wasn't a sin, but it was all I could think of. I told him that I remembered that just before my illness, a wealthy Jew, who had recently become a pauper came to ask me for a loan of several hundred rubles to help him get back on his feet.

"Unfortunately, I had to turn him down. I simply didn't have anything close to that sum. Still, I gave him what I could and tried to comfort him as best as possible.

"Comfort him?' My father asked, 'What did you say?'

"A saying from the wisest of men" - King Solomon. ~I said, "*Who is beloved, G-d reproves*" (Proverbs 3:12).

"And what did you mean by that?' My father asked immediately, as though he was on to something.

A Proof that G-d Loves Him

"What did I mean?" I replied, not really understanding what he was getting at. "Why, I meant the simple meaning. Sometimes G-d makes people suffer because He loves them, and the suffering can sometimes help clean them of their sins. 'Who is beloved, G-d reproves.' Therefore, he needn't feel bad - it is a proof that G-d loves him."

"Aha!" My father replied. 'Now I know why I didn't recognize you. I never would have said such a thing. Indeed, up here in Heaven we learn that verse completely differently.

"We interpret it like this: '*Whoever is beloved*' namely if you see someone that you love (and we are supposed to love every creature) who is suffering – then ~*G-d reprove.*"

"That is, you should reprove G-d! Like Moses did when he challenged G-d, saying, 'Why do You make Your people suffer?' (Ex. 5:22), and G-d listened!

"My son' my father concluded, 'when it comes to the suffering of others we have to protest! We must try to change G-d's mind and not justify Him!'

"And that's when I came back to life."

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**Source :** Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition of Rabbi Tuvia Bolton on his website, *OhrTmimim.org*.

**Biographical notes :** Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl [of blessed memory: 5490 - 11 Cheshvan 5548 (1730-1787 C.E.)], was a disciple of the *Baal Shem Tov* and senior disciple of the *Maggid of Mezritch*. He is the author of *Meor Enayim*. Rabbi Mordechai (Mottel) of Chernobyl [of blessed memory: 5530 - 20 Iyar 5697 (1770 - May 1837 C.E.)], was the second rebbe in the dynasty and a leading rebbe of his generation. He was the son-in-law of Rabbi Aharon the Great of Karlin, perhaps the most well-known follower of the *Maggid* in that generation, and subsequently of Rabbi David Seirkis, an important disciple of the *Baal Shem Tov*.  
**Connection :** Shabbat, 11<sup>th</sup> of the Jewish month of Cheshvan, is the *yahrzeit* of Rebbe Nachum Chernobler.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5783 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed in Israel.*

## The Bathtub Test



Dr. Stephen Smith, an American psychiatrist was visiting attending a conference in Israel and decided to visit one of the local hospitals specializing in mental health.

On his visit, Dr. Smith asked the hospital director, Dr. Dudu Smadar how he determined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized.

"Well," said Dr. Smadar, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."

"Oh, I understand," said Dr. Smith.

"A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup."

"No," said Dr. Smadar, "a normal person would pull the plug. Dr. Smith, do you want a bed near the window?"

*Reprinted from the Parshas Nitzavim 5782 email of Lekavod Shabbos.*