

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS SHOFTIM 5782

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Reb Moshe the Mathematician



When the Communists took over White Russia, Jewish children were required to attend public schools where the teachers tried to indoctrinate them with the “religion” of the state - atheism.

One female secondary school teacher in Luban became infuriated when the children under her charge countered her virulent attacks on religion by quoting their “Rabbiner,” their rabbi who eventually became the renowned Gadol Hador, HaGaon R’ Moshe Feinstein zt”l.

The teacher began to denigrate R' Moshe, poking fun at the ignorant "Rabbiner" who couldn't even do simple mathematics like a proper Soviet citizen. In order to cast doubt on R' Moshe's reputation for brilliance, the teacher sent him a calculus problem that she had obtained from her university professor, a problem deemed far too difficult for someone who had studied elementary mathematics.

When the young children presented R' Moshe with the calculus problem, he asked one of the youngsters for his textbook. The Tzaddik sat down for a few minutes and read through the textbook. Then, he wrote a solution to the question posed.

The teacher was astounded and sent a second problem which R' Moshe solved within minutes, asking the students to return it immediately so that the teacher would know he had not sought help from anyone else. The teacher insisted on meeting the rabbi and soon became his protector.

As the laws against the rabbinate became more and more severe, she would tell the local Communist officials that these laws did not apply to this Rabbiner, who was a great scholar in mathematics and not a "useless parasite."

The Torah tells us that through its diligent study and observance, it will serve as "proof" of our wisdom and discernment to other nations, who will say, "Surely, that great Nation is a wise and discerning people!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Vaeschanan 5782 email of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman's Torah Tavlin.

Maybe You Need New Glasses

By Hillel Fuld

I really didn't want to write this post until this operation officially ended and maybe I am speaking too soon, but am I the only one seeing these open miracles?

Yes, we have Iron Dome, which is a miracle in and of itself, but I'm not talking about that kind of miracle. I am talking splitting the sea kind of miracle.

A[lmost a] THOUSAND rockets from Gaza. A[lmost a] thousand!!!

Here are some of the exact numbers.

935 rockets fired by PIJ, 160 fell short in Gaza, 775 crossed into Israeli territory and 300 heading toward populated areas intercepted by Iron Dome (96% interception rate).

I want to talk about the 775. How do you explain 775 rockets falling into a tiny country smaller than New Jersey with zero casualties? Not even any serious

injuries. Some of these rockets fell on buildings and in heavily populated centers. What a “coincidence” that no one was there at that moment.

Well, there was one injury on our side. And he’s a “Palestinian” from Hebron who was in Ashkelon when the rocket struck.



So not one Jew was seriously harmed by 935 rockets aimed at populated areas with one goal: To kill as many Jews as possible.



Hillel Fuld

Does that make sense to you? Is that logical or is that a miracle?

So maybe the rockets aren’t that deadly, you say? Ok, that makes sense. Except one thing.

Um, the rockets that fell short and didn’t make it into Israel killed countless people on the Gaza side. Apparently, they are pretty dangerous.

These savages aimed rockets at Tel Aviv, at Jerusalem, at Ben Gurion Airport and not one person was harmed.

Of course, on our side, we did the exact opposite. Pinpoint targeting of the bad guys with incredible precision and success.

Even the big wins where we took out a senior commander were called off multiple times because kids were spotted in the area.

I don't know about you but I see blatant miracles in the events of the past few days.

If you don't, consider new glasses.

Reprinted from the Parashat Vaet'hanan 5782 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

A Mother's Tefilos (Prayers)

One of the students in Yeshivas Mir, Poland, became gravely ill, with hopes for his recovery becoming slimmer by the moment. The doctors who were treating him despaired of his living more than a few more days.



His mother made the trip from her home in Baranovitch to Mir to be by his side and to advocate for some treatment that would save his life. One of her relatives knew a doctor who was not among the well-known physicians in the community. He was brilliant, however, and had successfully treated patients upon whom others had given up. He was unconventional in his approach to medicine. His track record was impressive. They really had nothing to lose.

The doctor came and examined the patient. "I can help him," the doctor said. "The pill that I will give him might not work. If it does not work, it will hasten his passing under very painful circumstances."

The mother was confronted with a decision to make. Was it worth gambling on a treatment for which the results could either be life-saving or devastating? She conferred with rabbanim who came to the consensus that they should take a chance at saving her son.

The day that treatment was commenced, the Mashgiach, Horav Yechezkel Levenstein, zl, walked into the bais hamedrash and spoke of the unsurpassed importance of efficacy of tefillah. He concluded by exhorting the students to join together in storming the Heavens on behalf of their friend and colleague.

Suddenly, the doors of the bais hamedrash were opened as the mother of the student entered the room, walked up to the ahron ha'kodesh, opened its doors, and cried out to Hashem, "Ribono shel olam! You blessed me with a number of sons, of which I consecrated this one to a life of Torah. Why specifically do You want to take him from me?"

She then broke into bitter weeping, in which she was soon joined by the others who were witnessing this heart wrenching scene. They all prayed together until they soon heard the good news that her son had taken a turn for the better.

The Mashgiach spoke to the student body following the successful outcome of the student's therapy. His mother's tefillos had made the difference. Her pleading with Hashem emanated from the depths of her heart, her tefillos reflected absolute sincerity. Her sincere prayers had "turned the tide."

Reprinted from the Parshas Vaeschanan 5782 email of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum's Peninim on the Torah.

The Need to Utilize Different Pockets in One's Heart

To the thousands of people who were fortunate to know and learn from the renowned Rosh Yeshivah of Shor Yoshuv, R' Shlomo Freifeld zt"l, he was the quintessential teacher of Yiddishkeit. No matter the background, he saw and understood each individual as a human being created by Hashem Almighty, possessing unlimited potential for spiritual growth.

Combining his keen perception and the power of his Torah, he taught with his incomparable speaking style, the skills of harnessing one's individuality to fulfill each person's unique divine personal mission.

R' Shlomo lived with cheshbon hanefesh, putting thought into every aspect of life. Whether it was in Tefillah, Torah learning or just mundane day-to-day life, he accounted for every action at every moment. His daughter recounts that one summer, in the aftermath of a horrific incident in which an elderly Jewish couple, Holocaust survivors, were brutally murdered in their bungalow, everyone was profoundly

shocked and saddened by the news of this sweet, simple couple, who had undergone so much only to meet such a tragic ending.

Late one night, one of R' Shlomo's daughters called him, sounding distressed. "Abba, I am simply too depressed, too saddened by the tragedy to enjoy this summer."

Take the Time to Stop and Smell the Flowers

"Mein kind," said R' Shlomo in a soft tone, "a person has to have pockets in their heart. In one pocket, you should keep this incident and mourn for that poor couple. But you must also reach into a different pocket and find joy in the rest of your life. Reach into that pocket and take your children to the pool tomorrow ... and on your way, stop and smell the flowers!"



Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld

A close talmid of the Rosh Yeshivah taught in an elementary school and was constantly introducing innovative new programs for the boys. He once came to visit his rebbi, R' Shlomo, and told him how he taught the boys in his class the meaning and beauty of the tefillah, Brich Shmei, which is recited when the Sefer Torah is taken out of the Aron Kodesh before laining.

It is a prayer laden with kabbalistic undertones, but even the simple pshat is penetrating and thrilling. This talmid had taken the initiative and wrote out the entire tefillah with its English translation on the blackboard and encouraged the boys to copy it over into their notebooks. Then he had given them a test on the entire tefillah but allowed them to use their notes, thus ensuring that they would know it and do well on the test.

The Rosh Yeshiva Recalls a Kabbalah from His Rebbeim

R' Shlomo complimented him warmly on his initiative. Two weeks later, this talmid again came to visit his rebbi. R' Shlomo welcomed him, eagerly telling him, "I have to tell you something. I have a kabbalah from my Rebbeim that when Hashem wants to tell a person something, to give him a message that he needs to hear, He will let the person hear it, either through a sefer that he is learning from or in a conversation with a friend. A discerning person has to know how to hear those messages intended for him.

"As you know, I am very weak and it isn't easy for me to daven Shacharis in Yeshivah each morning. I do it anyway, because it's important to be part of the tzibbur, but it sure takes a lot out of me.

"When I get to yeshivah, I am already exhausted, but then I have to daven and I often struggle to daven with the proper kavanah. On days that there is laining, I work to concentrate on the laining as well. Though I cannot get out of my wheelchair to stand by laining like I used to when I was younger, I try to focus on the words. Inevitably, the only chance that I get to rest in preparation for laining is by the tefillah of Brich Shmei, which is when I allow myself a moment's break."

Focusing on a Magnificent Tefillah

R' Shlomo smiled warmly as he concluded his words, "But thanks to the message that you brought me the last time you were here, I know now that what I was doing wasn't correct. How can one not focus on such a magnificent tefillah?"

"I want to thank you," the Rosh Yeshivah said softly to his awed talmid. "My most exciting moments are right after I make a spiritual reckoning, a cheshbon hanefesh" (Adapted from Reb Shlomo: The life and legacy of Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld, by Yisroel Besser)

Reprinted from the Parshas Vaeschanan 5782 email of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman's Torah Tavlin.

Something In the Air

By Dvora Kiel

It was fairly early on Friday night, but Mrs. Traub complained that she didn't feel quite right and went to bed. By Shabbat morning she felt worse, and by the time the family retired at 12:00 a.m. on Mosa'ei Shabbat, she was really beginning to wonder what was wrong with her.

At 12:40 a.m., Mr. Traub went back downstairs to get a drink, having felt unusually thirsty. On his way back upstairs, his glance fell on the numbers on the carbon monoxide detector on the wall next to the steps. It should have read "zero," but he saw that it didn't. Not alarmed, he commented to his wife, "You know, it's funny, but I wonder how our little Sarale figured out how to move the numbers up on the carbon monoxide detector."

Hit Her Like a Bolt of Lightning

Mrs. Traub suddenly realized what was going on. It hit her like a bolt of lightning: not feeling well...the elevated carbon monoxide meter...and in no time they were on the phone with the utility company's emergency serviceman, who promised to be there within the hour.

At 1:00 a.m., they heard a light knock at the door. To their surprise, it was not the utility serviceman but a neighbor.

"What are you doing here at this hour?"

"You're not going to believe this, but we were away for Shabbat and have just returned. We didn't realize until this minute that we didn't have our house key. I think I must have left it on your counter when we stopped by before Shabbat. We saw the lights on and hoped that you were still awake so that we could get into our house."

Sure enough, the key was still on the counter in the kitchen.

Probably from a Leak in the Furnace

The next knock on the door was the utility company serviceman. On testing the air content in the house, he confirmed that there was an elevated level of carbon monoxide in the house, probably from a leak in the furnace. He told the Traub family that they'd have to leave the house immediately and not come back until the leak was fixed. But where could they go at that hour?

Hashem had already prepared a solution. They had one neighbor who they knew was still awake.

It is a frightening to think of what might have happened if Mrs. Traub had just gone to sleep again that night, still feeling unwell, and Mr. Traub hadn't been unusually thirsty, and if he hadn't happened to glance at the carbon monoxide monitor, and Mrs. Traub hadn't called the utility company to come and check the house, and the neighbors hadn't left their key.

Now the interesting part of this already hashgachah-packed story is the fact that on that very Friday when it had all begun, forty women had teamed up to bake challot as a merit for a childless couple. Included in these forty women were Mrs. Traub and two relatives. On that Shabbat three of the women were saved from possible disaster: two attempted but unsuccessful robberies and one near-carbon monoxide poisoning, G-d forbid. And to top it all off, nine months later the couple on whose behalf the challot were baked became the proud parents of a healthy baby boy! (Excerpted from the Feldheim Publisher's book – "When the Time is Right")

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

Popinsanity and the Power of "H"

By Rabbi David Sutton



Mr. Yaakov Goldenthal started his career as a musician in Monsey, New York. To increase his livelihood, he decided to open a cafe there. After all the preparation, time, effort, and investment, the cafe was abruptly shut down. He took

a big loss and tried to recoup some of his investment by selling off as much of the equipment as possible.

Ultimately, he was left with a \$300 popcorn machine that sat collecting dust in his basement. Sometime later, when he and his wife were throwing a party for their daughter, he rented a cotton candy machine and brought up the popcorn machine as well.

Wife Didn't Want to Keep the Popcorn Machine

His wife, tired of seeing it in the house, said that after the party it would have to be placed on the curb. At the party, one of the girls requested sweet popcorn. Yaakov decided to experiment and mixed some of the cotton candy ingredients with his popcorn. The guests all loved it!

After the party, he got a phone call from the girl's parents, asking if they could buy more of the sweet popcorn. Word spread and he, with his friend and partner Aaron Zutler, started selling the flavored popcorn. Slowly, the popcorn company grew, but there were plenty of bumps in the road.

Then, suddenly, in November 2018, came his big break: Media personality Oprah Winfrey listed the popcorn, called Popinsanity, on her annual list of "Oprah's favorite gifts."

Suddenly business quadrupled! The company's staff started putting in 16-hour days. They were selling 10,000 pounds of popcorn per week — at \$18 per bag! "Artisanal Popcorn," they called it. The media said it was propelled by the "power of O," but Yaakov says it was the Power of H — the Power of Hashem.

People pay well for advice on how to reach Oprah with their products, but his "lucky break" came due to a "chance" encounter with an Oprah staffer at a trade show. Could anyone have planned this?

"Hmmm, let's take this kosher popcorn from Monsey and get some of it over to Oprah to taste. Get it on her list. It'll be great! We'll sell it for \$18 a bag."

An Unlikely Success Story

No. No one could plan that out. Yaakov Goldenthal's unlikely success story illustrates that while we have to work and try to earn a living, whether our efforts are crowned with success is entirely in the realm of hashgachah pratis.

He could have pursued Oprah's endorsement relentlessly and come up empty-handed. Instead, he made himself available for blessing and it rained down upon him. When we try to analyze the story, it really is insanity. A business gone bad and a leftover popcorn machine became a large, successful business.

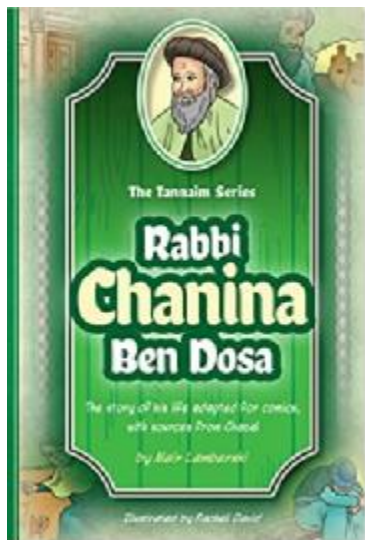
Rabbi Moshe Malka z"l, head of Mosdos Ohel Moshe in Bnei Brak and Elad, once said that Hashem has a special spray called "Charm Spray." When He sprays it on a product, it flies off the shelves. We must realize that our success in business

and in life does not rely on the middlemen: the executives, the promoters, the buyers, the bosses, the neighbors, etc.

We have to “make the popcorn,” but only Hashem can turn it into a shower of blessing. With belief in Hashem’s control of our success, we need not be afraid to take a reasonable risk on a venture that seems promising. All we need is Charm Spray!

Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eschanan 5782 email of At The ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book “A Daily Dose of Bitachon” by Rabbi David Sutton

The Greater Miracle



The Gemara (Taanis 25.) writes, "Every day a bas kol came forth and proclaims, 'Everyone in the world earns their parnassah in the merit of my son, Chanina, and my son Chanina suffices with a kav (small measure) of carobs the entire week.'"

His wife was embarrassed by their poverty. Erev Shabbos, she would heat her empty oven so that people should think she was baking something. Once, Reb Chanina ben Dosa's wife asked, "For how long will

we suffer in this world?" Reb Chanina replied, "What can we do?"

She replied, "Pray to Hashem." He davened, and a hand came forth from heaven and handed them a gold leg. Later, Reb Chanina told his wife, "I saw in my dream that in the future, tzaddikim will be eating at tables with four legs, while we will eat at a three-legged table."

She asked him, "Does it bother you that everyone will have a complete table and we will have a broken one?" He asked, "So what should we do?" She replied, "Daven that heaven should take back the gold leg we received." He did so, and Heaven took back the gold leg. Chazal say that the second miracle was greater than the first because the general rule is that Heaven gives and doesn't take back.

Reprinted from the Parshas Chuckas 5782 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

Vignettes of Rav Yerucham Levovitz of the Mir Yeshiva

One day, an Irish student in the Mir brought two new British boys – Alex Weisfogel and Yankel Goldman – to see R' Yerucham. Although they both hailed from London, they were very different from each other.

R' Yerucham welcomed them warmly and inquired about their trip to Poland. He asked them to compare the journey through Germany to the journey through Poland.

R. Yerucham Set Them Up with Chavrusos

After they had spoken for half an hour, R' Yerucham set them up with chavrusos. Only later did the boys understand what had actually transpired. R' Yerucham knew the differences between Germany and Poland and the sites along the way; he did not need to hear of their impressions.

He used this conversation as a basis to better understand the boys' natures and needs. Based on what each noticed and how they processed what they observed, he was able to gain insight about their personalities. After a halfhour conversation, he understood them well enough to arrange chavrusos that suited each boy perfectly.

R' Yerucham's devotion to his students – both spiritually and materially – went beyond natural bounds. He was intimately involved with their wellbeing, worrying about them as if they were his own young infants.

Storming the Heavens with Recitation of Tehillim

When a student would be mandated to appear before the draft board for possible induction into the Polish army, R' Yerucham would storm the Heavens for the boy's salvation, organizing all the students to recite Tehillim on behalf of the draftee.

On the day a boy was released from the draft, R' Yerucham celebrated a personal holiday. For students who had no parental support, R' Yerucham would step in and escort them to the chuppah, arranging for all of their needs.

Once, an acquaintance commented to R' Yerucham that his aged appearance belied his younger age. R' Yerucham replied, "You are a father to X number of children, and I am a father to hundreds."

Reprinted from the Parshas Korach 5782 email of The Weekly Vort.