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The Reward for Not Being Envious of Others



Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l

Rav Yaakov Feitman shared an incredible story. Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l, came home from Shul one Shabbos morning, and uncharacteristically, told a tale that had just occurred.

The head of the Chevra Kadishah related that just before Shabbos, he had arranged for the body of a Jewish woman to be exhumed from a Christian cemetery, and reburied in a Jewish grave. She had died five years before, but her body was perfectly preserved, with no signs whatsoever of decay or deterioration. Even her skin appeared as fresh as if she had just expired.

What was her extraordinary history? Ninety-five years prior, her family had traveled to the United States from Russia. Her sister passed away in childhood and she herself sustained a horrible blow to the brain, rendering her entirely

incapacitated, R”L. She remained in a medical facility for seventy-three years, until she died at the age of ninety, five years ago.

Rav Chaim explained to the Chevra Kadishah head why the woman’s bones had not decomposed. “The Gemara in Shabbos (152b) derives from the Pasuk in Mishlei (14:30), that ‘envy brings rotting of the bones.’ The Gemara concludes that only those who have the bad Middah of envy experience rotting of their bones in death.”

Rav Chaim went on to analyze the situation. “This woman,” he declared, “had no one of whom to be jealous of in the United States ninety years ago. She certainly was not envious of the gentiles, with whom she had little interaction, and Jews were rare in those days. After she received her injury at age seventeen, she clearly had no feelings of jealousy, and so, she passed away never having had a moment of envy in her life. Therefore, her body experienced no decomposition at all.

In fact, we can learn from her story that for people who have never had any jealousy at all, even their flesh does not spoil.” Rav Chaim added an anecdote he had heard from his grandfather, Rav Aryeh Levin, zt”l, the Tzadik of Yerushalayim.

“In Kovna,” Rav Chaim said, “when the entire cemetery had to be exhumed due to an edict from the government, only two graves contained people who were unaffected by time and the elements. One was a great Tzadik named Rav Leib Kovner, zt”l, and the other was an ordinary soldier.

His personal story was extremely uplifting. He had been drafted into the Russian army, where all the soldiers were forced to eat nonkosher food. However, this soldier refused to eat it. The Russians therefore force-fed him the food, and this soldier choked to death,”

Rav Chaim concluded with tears in his eyes. He said that his father, the Steipler Gaon, zt”l, had told him that in Morocco, when the graves in the Jewish cemetery were also being transferred to a new location, the bodies of the Tashbeitz and the Rivash were totally intact.

That Shabbos, Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zt”l, was the Sandek at a Bris in Bnei Brak, and this entire story was related to him. He listened intently, but he was bothered by a problem. He inquired, “Why was this lady’s body untouched, when we often see that even the bodies of very young children decompose?”

Rav Chaim answered that children who are incapable of envy because they are too young, do not have the Zechus of avoiding Kinah. However, that girl, who was already seventeen before her accident, had such amazing Middos that she had never been jealous of anyone, and therefore, she merited that her bones and flesh did not rot!

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

Wake Up Call!

Anat Cohen (not her real name) grew up a typical secular Israeli Jew. By no fault of her own, Anat received virtually no Jewish education. Like most of young people of her age, Anat served her requisite time in the Israeli army.

After her stint in the Army, Anat followed in the footsteps of thousands of other secular Israeli Army graduates and traveled to the far-east to find meaning. Anat soon found herself in India, where she became involved in eastern religions. The ceremonies of her new found religion involved worshiping statues, heavy incense burning and vegetarianism. Nobody could really blame Anat for getting involved with idol worship. She was simply never educated in the ways of Judaism in her native Israel.

Being a spiritual person, Anat soon became one of leading members of the temple. She became an expert in the ways of idol worship. Additionally, Anat was very skillful in attracting young Israelis to join the religion. Soon, it was decided that Anat should return home to Eretz Yisroel to establish a temple for the worship of that idol.

Anat dutifully traveled home and began to seek out a place to start up the worship of that idol in the Holy Land. Anat decided to open up the temple in Tiberius, in northern Eretz Yisroel. While in Tiberius, Anat sought out a suitable apartment where she could live and where the worshippers could worship their carved images.

While touring a new development with the real estate agent, a cement block mysteriously fell from several stories and landed below squarely on Anat's head, killing her instantly.

Although it appeared that Anat had passed away at the scene, the medics nevertheless flew her by helicopter to a hospital in Haifa several minutes away. Emergency room staff did their best to stop the bleeding and revive the young lady, but to no avail.

Six hours later, as Anat Cohen's body lay in the freezer, the unbelievable happened. Anat woke up. At first she thought she was dreaming as she looked around the hospital morgue. But then the pain of the head-blow presented itself, and Anat began moaning in agony. Thankfully, an attendant outside the morgue heard the moaning and wheeled Anat back to the emergency room.

After numerous surgeries which lasted several hours, Anat Cohen was placed in the ICU, but at least she was alive! She woke up several hours after the surgery. The doctors quickly notified Anat's family who rushed the hospital worried sick, but thankful that their daughter was alive.

Anat began her slow road to recovery with much bed rest and physical therapy. While in the hospital she had many hours to reflect on her life.

In the six hours that she was dead, Anat reported that her soul had left her body and ascended to the spiritual world. Due to the trauma of the whole experience, she was reticent to share the details about her life-after-death experience. She could say however with certainty that there she knew that there is such a thing as spiritual reward and punishment after death.



Soon after, to the surprise (and relief) of her family, Anat announced that she was leaving the idol worship which she had learned in India. Instead, Anat told her family and friends that she was going to pursue an orthodox Jewish lifestyle. Anat's family was a little surprised, because Anat had never before shown interest in Judaism. However, nobody questioned her after what she had gone through.

Little by little, Anat learned about Judaism. When she was first becoming religious, Anat would often spend Shabbos with religious families in order to taste the beauty of the holy day. One Friday afternoon, Anat traveled to Jerusalem to spend Shabbos with a Sephardic family. The hostess introduced herself to Anat and

invited her into her guest room so that Anat could get ready for Shabbos. The hostess left the room and went to tend to her own Shabbos preparations. Suddenly, the hostess heard a scream and a thud in the guest room. She ran back to the room where she saw Anat lying on the floor, apparently having fainted.

When Anat came to, she told her hostess why she had fainted. On the wall of the guest room there were some paintings of holy Rabbis. Anat's hand was shaking as she pointed to one picture and asked what the name of that particular rabbi was. The hostess told Anat that the painting was of the Ben Ish Chai, of blessed memory, a leading Rabbi in Baghdad, Iraq who passed away about 100 years ago. She then told the hostess a stunning revelation. Anat recognized the Rabbi in the painting as one of the three Rabbinical judges who sat on her heavenly trial!

The details of her life-after-death experience now began to come out. Anat described how when the cinder block hit her in the head, she did not feel any pain. Rather she felt herself being drawn above, while she could see that her body was laying on the ground. She was very confused at first. How could she see herself? She soon realized that she was seeing her physical self through the spiritual "eyes" of her soul.

At she hovered above, she watched all the efforts that the medics and emergency room personnel had taken to revive her. Eventually however, he felt herself being pulled even higher, away from the physical world into the spiritual world. Once in the spiritual world she described how she experienced a trial with three great Rabbis who weighed her mitzvahs against her spiritual shortcomings. Anat had never known, but apparently she had descended from some great Rabbis. In the merit of her forefathers, Anat was given another chance on this earth. And that is when her soul reentered her body.

Anat is alive and well and living in Eretz Yisroel a fully religious lifestyle. She tells her story to anyone who will listen, in order to encourage fellow Jews to invest in their spirituality.

Although the spiritual world is generally hidden to our physical eyes, Hashem occasionally opens up the curtain just a little bit so that we can take a glance at the Eternal. We can be inspired by this story to always try to grow in spirituality. As we mentioned above, Mitzvahs are like oxygen for the flame of the soul. Everyone should therefore try to take upon themselves more mitzvahs, such as putting on tefillin, daily Torah study, Shabbos observance and kosher eating. Any Jew who does more mitzvahs will immediately feel the warmth, happiness and fulfilling feeling of being more connected with G-d.

Reprinted from the Parashat Beha'aloscha 5785 email of Good Shabbos Everyone.

Just Be Yourself?



Rav Naftali Amsterdam

Rav Naftali Amsterdam was a Talmid of Rav Yisroel Salanter. He once came to his teacher and said, “Rebbi, if I had the head of the Shaagas Aryeh, and if I had the Neshamah of the author of the Yesod V’Shoresh HaAvodah and if I had your good Middos, then I could truly be a Servant of Hashem.”

Rav Yisroel Salanter responded to him, “Naftali, with your head, and with your heart, and with your good Middos, you can be Naftali Amsterdam! That is all you have to be. You do not need to be the Shaagas Aryeh or Rav Yisroel Salanter or anybody else. Just be YOU, and that is how you will serve Hashem!”

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

How to Answer a Question

By Yoni Schwartz

He heard a faint squeak as he opened the old-fashioned door. The first thing that caught his mind about the room was how many seforim there were inside. Yaakov (not real name) had come to Rav Elazar Shach, ZT”L, for advice about which job to take. He had been offered a teaching position at two different institutions and asked for the Rav’s opinion on which one to choose.

In an audible yet gentle voice, Rav Shach said, “Come back in a few days. I need some time to think about it.”

A few days later, he heard, “Ring, ring.” He answered the phone and was surprised by who was on the other line. The voice sounded slightly excited and very curious. One of the two institutions called to ask, “What is your connection to Rav Shach?!”



Rav Elazar Shach

A bit confused he responded with a slight stutter, “Ah...ah...ah...I’m sorry. What?”

They repeated the question.

He responded, “I’m not extremely close to him. I had simply asked the Rav for guidance on which job to take. How did you know I spoke with him?”

They told him, “Did you know he rode the bus for almost an hour to come here in person and check out our place?” It turned out that Rav Shach had taken the time out of his overwhelmingly tight schedule to go down to each facility to see which was best.

A few days later, he returned to Rav Shach, who told him which job he thought he should take, which happened to be the place that had recently called him. Afterwards, he asked the Rav, “Why did the Rav travel so far to check out each place? I didn’t mean for him to shlep.”

Rav Shach’s response was touching yet powerful: “A Jew asks me for advice, and I shouldn’t do everything to ensure he gets the best guidance possible?!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Shelach 5785 email of Torah Sweets.

The Door that Opened Heavenly Doors

By Adina Perez

It started with a car door.

A woman parked her car and swung her door open just as we were passing. It hit our vehicle hard. Instead of apologizing, she insisted we had driven into *her* door. She threatened to sue us. I was furious. I told my husband we had to fight back, to take her to court. But he refused.

My husband avoids conflict – not out of weakness, but out of strength. He chooses peace over pride. He said, “Let it go,” and continued driving, even with the damage glaring back at us. Out of respect, I let the matter rest. But inside, I still wanted justice. So, I turned to prayer.

I asked G-d to find another way – maybe someone else would hit that spot, and then the car would get fixed. It was a strange prayer, but I meant it sincerely. And then, the next day, something even stranger happened.

While driving, a car next to me swerved – no reason, no signal – and slammed right into the exact same spot. The driver, a young woman named Liora, jumped out, apologizing repeatedly. She said she was new behind the wheel and didn’t want to go through insurance. “I’ll pay whatever it costs,” she said.

It seemed as if my prayer had been answered. We exchanged contact info, and I told her I’d speak to my husband. But when I explained the situation to him, my husband said gently, “You know we can’t take anything from her. That spot was already damaged. According to Jewish law, we can’t accept payment when the harm can’t be clearly traced.”

I was stunned. Everything had lined up so perfectly. My heart cried, *This was your chance!* But my conscience said otherwise. I wrestled with the decision. It was hard – harder than I expected. But in the end, I called Liora and told her she owed nothing. She was shocked.

“You’re the most honest person I’ve met,” she said. “Because of you, I promise I’ll fast next year on Tisha B’Av.” I didn’t expect her to mean it. But a year later, as the fast ended, I told my husband, “I wish I could know if Liora kept her word.” Just then, a message popped up on my phone.

It was Liora. – and more. She had started keeping Shabbat. “All because of your honesty,” she wrote.

That same evening, during the fast, I had been reading about Tisha B'Av and came across a verse in *Zechariah* 8:19, a prophecy I had never seen before. It reads: “*Thus says the L-rd of Hosts: The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months will become times of joy and gladness, cheerful festivals for the house of Judah. Therefore, love truth and peace.*”

It was as if the words had been written about my own journey. The decision I had made the previous year – on that very same date – had been one of truth and peace, even though it came at a cost. And now, through Liora’s transformation and this teaching from *Zechariah*, I understood something deeper: G-d desires not just ritual mourning, but honesty between people. The fast itself is meant to lead us toward integrity and compassion.

My husband, a devoted Talmudist, had quietly led me toward this truth without force or pressure – simply through his own unwavering integrity. And because of that, a broken moment was mended in ways far greater than a car could ever show.

This is the story that taught me what balance really means: choosing truth over impulse, restraint over revenge, peace over proof. Balance leads to peace. And peace – I’ve come to believe – is the reason the world was created for.

Reprinted from the June 8, 2025 website of The Jewish Press.

Tzitzis Candy Machines

By Aharon Spetner

Their mouths watering, the Greenbaum family stood in awe at the Jolly Munz Candy Factory, watching streams of steaming hot melted chocolate flow into rivers of golden caramel. They were absolutely amazed to see the incredible process of how their favorite candies were made.

“This next room is our candy wrapping area,” said the tour guide as the children looked down through large glass windows at a massive space filled with gleaming machines. “And you picked the perfect day to visit — today we started using our brand-new automatic candy wrapping machines!”

Below them, giant machines were taking thousands of freshly made candies, wrapping them at lightning speed, and dumping them into boxes.

“Until today,” the guide explained, “our workers had to wrap each candy by hand. Now they just load the wrapping paper, press a button, and boom — the machine does the rest!”

“Like those workers over there?” asked Shimmy, pointing to two men who were completely ignoring their new machine, which still sat in its box, while they painstakingly wrapped candies by hand.

“What? Where?” the guide asked, startled. He followed Shimmy’s finger and frowned. “Oh no! Why aren’t they using their machine?”

“Maybe it doesn’t work,” suggested Yitzy.

“Impossible,” said the guide. “These machines were custom-made and tested before delivery!”

The guide rushed down to the factory floor and approached the two workers.

“Jimbo! Earl! Why aren’t you using your new candy wrapping machine?”

“Oh, we are using it,” said Jimbo with a grin. “It’s great for leaning on when we get tired!”

Earl nodded. “Look at how many candies we’ve wrapped! Bet we’re doing better than the others.”



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

“Of course not!” the guide exclaimed. “Look at Sticky Stu and Mo Munchy over there — their boxes are overflowing, and you haven’t even filled your first one yet!”

“Hmmm... maybe our machine is defective,” said Jimbo, scratching his head.

“Nonsense!” the guide said firmly. “This machine won’t magically help you unless you plug it in and use it properly! It’s powerful — but if it stays in the box, it’s just a fancy piece of metal to lean on.”

Up on the observation deck, the Greenbaum family watched the scene unfold with amused smiles.

“Kinderlach,” said Totty, “it’s funny, yes — but can anyone tell me what important lesson we can learn from this?”

“That we should turn on the oven when we make Challah?” said Basya, grinning.

“That we have to dial the number before we can call someone?” added Shimmy.

“Well... actually, yes,” Totty chuckled. “Those are good examples.”

“And we should put on Shabbos clothes before eating gefilte fish!” said little Yaeli with a giggle.

Totty smiled. “Yaeli, you’re closer than you think. Boys, we put on Tzitzis every day, right? Do you remember what the Torah says about them?”

“We say it in Shema!” said Yitzy. “The posuk says: — when we see the Tzitzis, we remember Hashem’s mitzvos and keep them.”

“Exactly!” said Totty. “The Torah tells us that Tzitzis is like a special machine that helps us remember Hashem and do His mitzvos. But it doesn’t work on its own. Just like the candy machine won’t wrap anything if it stays in the box, Tzitzis won’t help us unless we use it.”

“You mean it’s like a remembering machine?” asked Shimmy.

“In a way, yes,” said Totty. “But we have to turn it on. That means thinking about Hashem whenever we see the Tzitzis — that’s how the ‘machine’ works. When you notice them during the day, take a quick peek and remind yourself: Hashem gave us mitzvos, and I want to keep them.”

Totty turned to Basya. “And even though girls don’t wear Tzitzis, you can still learn from them. When you see my Tzitzis, or Yitzy’s and Shimmy’s, you can also think about Hashem and His mitzvos.”

“Thanks, Totty,” said Yitzy. “Although I think from now on my Tzitzis will also remind me of candy.”

“As long as they also remind you to make a brocha on the candy,” said Shimmy with a grin.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

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

The Deal that Wasn't

By Rabbi Nachman Seltzer



Hacham Baruch and Jerry Natkin

One day Jerry Natkin came to see Hacham Baruch. Jerry was a successful businessman, the owner of William Barthman Jewelers. At the time he was in the process of finalizing a deal with a major shopping center in Manhattan that would give him space on the ground floor for a large retail jewelry store.

“Rabbi,” he said, “I was wondering if you can help me out.”

“What do you need?”

“I need your help in arranging a contract.”

What Kind of Contract?

“What kind of contract?”

“I’m about to open a new store in the city. It’s a prime location, and I’m excited about the possibilities. But there is one issue that I need to iron out: Every store in the mall must be open seven days a week. In order for me to rent the space for my new flagship store, I need to find a way for the store to remain open on Shabbat. That’s why I’m here. I need the Rabbi to help me write the kind of contract

that will allow me to take a non-Jewish partner just for Shabbat. The store will be mine six days a week and his on Shabbat.”

Feel Free to Find Another Rabbi Who Will Do It For You

“Jerry, I don’t arrange those kinds of Shabbat contracts,” Hacham Baruch told him. “They go against my principles. But if you want, feel free to find another rabbi who will do it for you.”

“I don’t want to go to another rabbi,” Jerry insisted. “You’re my rabbi.”

“Jerry,” Hacham Baruch said, “can I ask you a question?”

“Of course, Rabbi, what do you want to know?”

“Right now, do you have enough money to put food on the table?”

“Of course. The Rabbi knows that I’m a successful businessman.”

“Then why do you need to do this? I don’t like these kinds of partnerships, and if you’re already doing well and don’t really need to do this, then I recommend that you back away from the deal and don’t open a store that will be open on Shabbat, non-Jewish partner or not.”

But, Rabbi, I’ll Be Making a Lot of Money from this Deal!

“But, Rabbi, I’ll be making a lot of money from this deal!”

The Rabbi looked at his congregant. “Jerry, listen to me. Don’t do it.”

There it was. The Rabbi had spoken. Jerry thought it over. In the end he decided to follow the Rabbi’s advice and didn’t sign the lease. The conversation that Jerry had with the Rabbi took place in the spring of 2001. The following September, just a few months after his decision to back out of the deal he had almost closed with the management of the Twin Towers, terrorists crashed planes into the World Trade Center, destroying both towers and sparking wars with Afghanistan and Iraq.

Had Jerry signed the deal, not only would his store have been completely destroyed, but there is a good chance that he would have been there when it happened as well. But he wasn’t there — because he obeyed his rabbi.

Until this day Jerry Natkin keeps a copy of the lease he almost signed but didn’t thanks to Hacham Baruch. It’s a reminder of the miracle that happened to him and a reminder of how important it is for a person to have a rabbi and to follow his advice.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Nasso 5785 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table.
Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “Hacham Baruch”*

Reb Leizer's Legacy

A frum businessman, Reb Leizer (name changed), was once approached by his excited non-Jewish partner, who had a story to share.

"I recently noticed another Orthodox Jew in a public place," the partner told Reb Leizer. "There were some sights passing by that I knew you would consider inappropriate. From my experience with you, I knew that an Orthodox Jew would try to avoid looking at such things, so I watched to see how he would react. Sure enough, whenever something inappropriate passed by, the man placed a book in front of his face until it was gone!"

This story is a credit to that anonymous Jew whom the non-Jew observed but it's also a credit to Reb Leizer himself. Clearly, he had given his partner the impression that Jews live with a different sense of reality, where behavior is guided not only by what is visible, but by a higher spiritual standard.

Reprinted from June 12, 2025 email of Rabbi Shraga Freedman.

What Rav Moshe Did?

By Yoni Schwartz

Each Shabbos, Rav Moshe Feinstein, ZT"l, would walk to his yeshiva. On his way home Friday night, he would often pass by a park where his granddaughters were playing. Every time they saw him, they would run over, excitedly asking for a Shabbos bracha: "*Yesimcha Elokim... Yevarechecha Hashem V'yishmerecha...*" With joy, Rav Moshe would place his hands on their heads and bless them each time.

One week, when his granddaughters were about nine years old, they were joined by two friends - also nine - who asked for a Shabbos bracha as well when they saw their friends receiving one. Standing nearby were Rav Moshe's sons, Rav Reuven and Rav Dovid, who watched with curiosity. By that age, placing his hands on the girls' heads might no longer have been appropriate and they wondered what their father would do.

To their surprise, Rav Moshe gently placed his hands on the girls' heads and gave them the bracha just like he did to his granddaughters. One of his sons later asked him why he did so. Rav Moshe replied, "I could find ten heterim that would permit me to touch their heads, but I couldn't find even one heter that would allow me to embarrass them."

Reprinted from the Parshas Naso email of Torah Sweets.