

# SHABBOS STORIES

## FOR PARSHAS KEDOSHIM 5784

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## Twenty Minutes



*The Klausenburger Rebbe*

Meshulem lost everything in the war — everything. He was all alone. Even more than that, he was angry, and he decided that he was done with Torah, done with mitzvos. His friends tried to convince him...to no avail. Meshulem was not willing to listen to anyone.

“But, Meshulem,” his friends pressured, “the Klausenburger Rebbe (Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam, zt”l, 1905-1994) is in the camp. Why don’t you go to him? He knows how to give chizuk.”

“I don’t need chizuk,” Meshulem retorted bitterly. “I saw everything with my own eyes. I saw what they did. I am done with chizuk! I want nothing more to do with G-d or religion.”

His friends were persistent, and finally, Meshulem relented. “Fine!” he snapped. “I’ll go to him, but on one condition — the Rebbe should not speak one word to me about Yiddishkeit.”

The Rebbe agreed. Meshulem walked in, and before the Rebbe could even say a word, Meshulem said, “Please only ask me ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions. I will not answer with more than one word!”

### **“Are You Angry?”**

The Rebbe asked him, “Are you angry?”

“Of course!”

“Why?” the Rebbe asked.

“What kind of a question is that?” Meshulem exclaimed. “I lost holy parents, brothers and sisters. All of them were tzaddikim. And me!” he exploded. “I was always the black sheep. I was a nothing! Yet, I am the one who remained alive. Is that called Hashgachah? Is that called Hashem running the world?”

“This also happened to you?” the Rebbe cried out in astonishment. “Just like it happened to me? I also lost parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, my wife, and all of my eleven children. I, the lowest of them all, am also the only one who remained alive!”

### **A Fully Twenty Minutes of Heaving, Cleansing Crying**

The Rebbe then put his hand on Meshulem’s shoulder and began to cry, tears coursing down his cheeks. Meshulem also began to cry, shaking with sobs, the bitter tears streaming from his eyes. One minute passed, two minutes...a full twenty minutes of heaving, cleansing crying.

When R’ Meshulem, who had come to the New York area to spend Yom Tov with his children who live in Flatbush, told this story to Rabbi Paysach Krohn, Rabbi Krohn asked him, “So, what made you do teshuvah and start living as a Yid again?”

“Those twenty minutes!” was his reply. “At that meeting, the Rebbe didn’t speak to my brain. He spoke to my heart! After crying for those twenty minutes, after unburdening all the pain and anger from my heart, I was able to do teshuvah and start keeping mitzvos again.”

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It was in Kiryat Sanz, Netanya, at the Shabbos sheva berachos of his oldest son, the current Sanzer Rebbe. The minhag in Sanz at a Shabbos sheva berachos is that before reading from the Torah on Shabbos morning, the chassan delivers a pilpul

derashah in halachah and aggada. The Rebbe's son indeed gave a brilliant, intricate derashah.

After the chassan's derashah, instead of continuing with Krias HaTorah, the Klausenburger Rebbe walked up to the bimah and gave his own derashah on the same sugya, adding many new chiddushim to those of his son.

When he was about to finish, the Rebbe began speaking, completely uncharacteristically, on a personal note. He said, "I am standing here, amazed and astounded! What good thing could I have done in my life to give nachas to Hashem that He has repaid me with such berachah? After thinking about this a lot, I came to the conclusion that I never, ever, expressed any displeasure or complaints against Hashem, no matter how much I suffered. Whatever I endured, I accepted Hashem's will with love..."

*Reprinted from the Parshat Acharei Mos 5784 email of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – "The Klausenburger Rebbe" by Avrohom Birnbaum.*

# The Silent Hero

## By Rabbi Zachariah Wallerstein



**Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein, zt"l**

I once heard the following story, which was confirmed to be entirely true. The man, in fact, who relayed it knew the individuals involved.

Before the Holocaust, the vast majority of families were very poor. There was the occasional exception, but by and large, the Jews were peasants with close to no money. One known family in Poland was a bit more well off than others. Though not rich, the father decided to purchase a pair of boots for his son to make it through

the cold winter months. In those days, under such otherwise impoverished conditions, a pair of boots was a gift above and beyond. The father knew that his son would gain a lot of good use from them, and wear them through until they were worn out on every stitch.

And so, he did. The father bought the pair of boots for his son, and off he went to school. Two days later, the son returned from school wearing his shoes. His boots were not on his feet nor in his knapsack.

“Meir, where are your new boots?”

### **He Gave the Boots to His Fatherless Classmate**

“Well, there is a boy in my class and his father died, and they have no money and no food. His shoes have big holes in them, and my shoes don’t, so I gave him my boots.”

Hearing this, the father didn’t know what to do. Should he tell his son to ask for his boots back? That wouldn’t be a great lesson in chinuch (educating his son). But to allow his son to so easily forego a new pair of boots was not a simple matter. Money was short and hard to come by, and the decision to buy his son these boots had made sense because his son could really use them. What was he to do?

After thinking it over for some time, he decided that he’d say nothing. On his own, his son would come to weigh the value of his own actions and see their merit. Every time it would be cold and his feet would be freezing and wet, he’d remember the chesed he did by giving up his shoes. That action would mean something to him, whether positive or negative, and the father awaited what lesson it would be for his son.

The following year, the father bought a new coat for his son. The winter months had rolled around once again, and a nice, warm coat would do the job of staving off the bitter cold. A few days later, though, the son returned with no coat.

“Where’s your coat, Meir?” asked his father.

### **He Also Gave the Coat to His Freezing Classmate**

“Remember the boy I gave my boots to? He’s freezing, and I have a coat from last year, so I gave him my new one.”

At this point, the father began growing curious. It was one thing for his son to give away his boots, but now his coat? But what was he to do? He knew he didn’t have the money to buy another coat.

But that was that. Just like he had done with the pair of boots, he’d do with the coat. He’d let his son be. And he was. His son layered himself up with several sweaters and walked around that way.

One day, the son returned home and told his father the following. “The boy I gave my boots and coat to just lost his mother and he doesn’t have a place to sleep. He has no parents. Could he stay with us?”

Immediately, the father thought of all the implications and ramifications of opening his home to this orphaned boy. There was minimal space in their house and, moreover, they didn’t have enough money to support another child.

### **A Chesed the Father was Unable to Do**

“That I can’t do, Meir. Maybe you can find someone else in the class who can do so? We don’t have any room.”

Later that night, the son was nowhere to be found. He had left the house earlier in the afternoon, but he never returned. The father, as the minutes ticked by, turned more and more nervous. It was Poland and it was dark outside!

“Where could he be?” wondered the father over and over. Had his son been kidnapped? It wasn’t a far-off possibility, however dreadful the thought was. Perhaps something had happened at school and it had bothered him, so much so that he wanted to be alone. With these thoughts swirling in his mind, the father along with a small group of other neighborhood families began looking for him.

Until the father found him. The boy had been in the Esras Nashim (women’s section) of the shul sleeping on a bench together with the other boy whose mother had died. He didn’t want the boy to sleep alone.

Fast forward to years following the Holocaust ...

### **Both Boys Survived the Holocaust**

Both boys survived, with the boy who had given the boots and jacket away moving to Israel, and the other boy whose mother died immigrating to America. The latter boy in America wound up becoming very wealthy, whereas the former boy ended up studying for several years in yeshiva and becoming well-learned. He also was blessed with a large family. That being said, he lived in a relatively small apartment in Israel.

One day, in walked a wealthy American to the yeshiva where the other now grown man was learning. Remembering what had happened many years before, the American inquired if his old childhood friend was around? He indeed was. Being pointed in the direction of where he was studying, the American approached the man. Introducing himself, the American reminded the Israeli man who he was.

“Remember, many years ago... we used to attend at the same school? You bought me a pair of boots and a jacket. You remember that one time when you kept me company at night, and your father found us...?”

“I can’t believe it!” exclaimed the Israeli man. “I’ve thought many times about you. I didn’t know if you’d make it out of the war, and here you are now!”

“Come outside,” then said the American. “I want to talk to you.”

“I knew that you were alive and living here. And I came here to tell you something. But I must preface my words by letting you know that I am not taking no for an answer. You have nine children, and I am going to pay for their nine weddings. Not only that, but all of the clothing for these weddings is on me. You gave me your boots and you gave me your coat. In addition, I will buy every one of your children an apartment when they get married because of that night you came to join me in the shul and you didn’t let me sleep alone. I am never going to let you be alone.”

### **The Man Did Exactly as He Promised**

This man did exactly as he said he would. For nine weddings, everything was covered, including the wedding attire and apartment.

Now, you hear this and think, “Wow, what an amazing story!” But I want to tell you something that hit me when I thought about this. What is incredible about this story is not what you might think it is. What’s incredible comes back down to the father of the boy who gave away the boots and coat. Had the father made his son retrieve the boots, all that happened never would have. The father understood what education to a child means. Even though he just bought him a pair of boots and he gave it away, if he would have told him to take them back and not to share, what would have been gained? The few dollars that he spent.

Now how much does a pair of boots cost? Let’s just say ten dollars. And what about a coat? Fifty dollars. So, this father lost sixty dollars in total. He feels bad that he bought boots and a coat for his child when money is limited, and he lost it all because his son gave it to a friend. It would certainly be a lot of money in those days. But what did Hashem give him back? Hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps even millions.

### **An Incredible Return of Father’s Decision**

Think about it. You give away sixty dollars and get over a million in return. Now that’s a very different picture when you think of it this way. Why did the father do this? Because he understood that chinuch (educating a child) comes before personal wants and needs. The immediate, natural reaction might be, “Don’t give away the boots I especially got for you!” But this father took an entirely different route. He lived for something bigger than himself. He had Hashem and the Torah in his life, and that led the way to educating his son in a way that perhaps was less conventional.

But less conventional sometimes means more impactful.

The boy did an incredible act of kindness. But as it goes for the father, he would often be overlooked in this story. But when you really think about it, he is the true, quiet, silent hero.

Silent literally and silent figuratively, but loud and clear in the Heavens Above.

*Reprinted for the Parshat Tazria 5784 edition of the TorahAnytimes.com Newsletter.*

# In the Merit of Our Parents

**By Rabbi Yoni Schwartz**

In the early 1950's, some yeshiva bochurim visited the Tchebiner Rav, ZT"l, in Yerushalayim to discuss various talmudic concepts. At one point in the conversation, the Rav asked the bachurim an extremely difficult question, a question to which nobody had the answer to.

After some time, a bachur in the back gave an incredible answer which greatly surprised the Rav. This bachur was none other than Rav Moshe Sternbuch, Shlita.

The Rav responded, "This is not your own answer." The Rav continued, "Your answer is so good and so extraordinary that it is not possible that at your age you could have thought of it on your own. This answer most likely comes from your mother, from her tefillos and her tears in crying to Hashem that her son should be a talmid chacham (Torah sage)."

## **He Knew They Would Need Jewels for Bribes**

Rabbi Yechiel Spiro once told a moving story of a Holocaust survivor. When he was young and the Nazis invaded his town, they told his family they had an hour to pack what they could before they were transported on the train. As a young man, he understood where they were being taken and knew that they would need jewels and money for bribes if they were to survive.

That is why, as the clock was ticking, when his father asked him to iron his white shirt, he was very surprised. Almost challenged to comply because this seemed so irrational, he nevertheless did it simply because his father asked him. Half an hour later, he handed his father a perfectly ironed shirt and very politely asked why his father wanted this.

His father explained, "I know where we are heading and that most of us won't survive. I also know that one of the most valuable things I can give you is the opportunity to perform kibbud av v'eim (honoring parents) - inexplicable kibbud av v'eim, and you did it anyway. That is worth more than all the silver and diamonds you can imagine."

*Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos 5784 email of Torah Sweets.*

# The Special Shabbos Candles



Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein once related about a woman who had become an observant Jew, but her husband refused to join her and he would not take on doing the Mitzvos with her. She tried, at least, to get her husband to stop smoking in the house on Shabbos, and she told him that it disturbed the atmosphere of Shabbos that she was trying to create, but her husband adamantly refused.

## **The Rav's Compromise Suggestion**

She went to her Rav and asked him for advice with her situation, and the Rav came up with a suggestion for a compromise, that the husband should refrain from smoking only for as long as the Shabbos candles were lit.

The husband thought that the suggestion was reasonable, and he agreed. At first the wife used standard Shabbos candles, but soon, she switched them and started using thicker candles, which burned longer. The husband, true to his word, refrained from smoking as long as the candles burned.

As the weeks went by, the woman used thicker and thicker candles until eventually she began using candles that lasted 24 hours, the entire duration of Shabbos. The husband dutifully kept to his pledge, and as a result of his wife's Shabbos candles, he increased his own observance of Shabbos! (Aleinu L'Shabei'ach, vol. 2, p. 537)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

# The Battlefield

## Minyan for Kaddish

Rav Boruch Brull writes a story. Louis Herman was a young Jew who lived in Canada during World War II. After hearing about the terrible things that were happening to the Jews in Europe, he decided to enlist in the army to fight against the Germans. When he finished his training, young Louis was transferred to Italy. As a sergeant in the army, he was assigned to the front, in the midst of heavy fighting. Throughout the difficult months of the war, Louis kept as many Mitzvos as he possibly could.

### **Desired to Say Kaddish on His Mother's Yartzeit**

On the day of his mother's Yartzeit, despite being many miles away from any Shul, Louis wanted to say Kaddish for her. This prayer, however, would require a Minyan, and finding ten Jews in the middle of a battlefield in Italy was not going to be easy. Louis knew of only five other Jewish soldiers in his unit.

Louis approached the army chaplain, who was a priest, and explained his predicament. Louis asked the chaplain if he knew of any other Jewish soldiers in the area. To Louis's surprise, the chaplain not only knew where he could find other Jewish soldiers, but he also understood the meaning of a Minyan.

"See that area over there?" The chaplain pointed to a tall observation tower. "That is where our soldiers guard our unit and watch for advancing German soldiers. When they see any activity, they radio the information back to the artillery unit to help us aim our bombs more precisely. There are four Jews who occupy positions in the observation tower. If you'd like, I can put in a call to them and ask that they come over to our area for your Minyan."

### **Thanked Everyone for Helping Him to Say Kaddish**

Louis was overjoyed. He would have exactly the ten men required to make up a Minyan! And to his great relief, the soldiers were happy to oblige. Louis was able to say Kaddish on his mother's Yartzeit with a Minyan. After they finished Davening, Louis thanked everyone for joining him and enabling him to fulfill this meaningful personal obligation.

As the four soldiers turned to walk back to the observation tower, they suddenly heard a loud explosion and saw a most startling sight. The entire observation tower and its contents had just been blown up! Only the four Jewish soldiers, who had just 'happened' to be busy doing a very important Mitzvah, had

escaped certain death! Rav Brull adds, “The Gemara teaches us (Pesachim 8b) that messengers who go to do a Mitzvah are saved from harm. Not only do acts of Chesed help others, but those very acts can also save us!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.*

## Baruch’s Promise to The Chofetz Chaim



Baruch was a young man learning in the Chofetz Chaim’s Yeshivah in Radin, where he excelled and became a Talmid Chacham. It reached a point where his parents felt he should leave the Yeshivah to come home and get married. Baruch went to the Chofetz Chaim’s house to say goodbye, and get a Brachah before he departed.

After telling the Chofetz Chaim of his plans, the Chofetz Chaim gave him a stern look, and asked Baruch to promise that he would never be Mechalel Shabbos. Baruch didn’t know whether to laugh or cry, since he was never Mechalel Shabbos in his life, but realized that maybe his Rebbe saw him do something once.

He promised the Chofetz Chaim that he would never desecrate Shabbos, but the Chofetz Chaim kept his stern look, and extended his hand. He said, “Shake my hand and guarantee me that you will never, under any circumstance be Mechalel Shabbos.”

Now, Baruch felt like crying because obviously his Rebbe suspected him. Baruch shook the Chofetz Chaim’s hand and made the promise. He left feeling dejected instead of uplifted. At home, Baruch met Rochel, got married and started

building a family. They had four children. Baruch learned in the Kollel, and worked a few hours a week in the local grocery, and they somehow made ends meet.

Everything changed when war broke out, and Baruch and Rochel made the difficult decision to leave for America. This meant to change everything they had ever known in their life, and say goodbye to their family, not knowing if they would ever see them again. They boarded the boat and came to America, and it was not long before they realized that the streets were not paved with gold, and it certainly wasn't the land of opportunity, especially for someone Frum.

### **A Low Wage Job in the Textile Industry**

Baruch got a job in the textile industry for a low wage, and he didn't have time to learn Torah that much anymore since he was focusing on bringing home food for his family. He became known as a reliable, hard worker and worked his way up in the company. Soon, The Great Depression set in, and his meager salary was cut, making things even more difficult.

One day, Baruch came to work and received notice that his boss, Mr. Mark, wanted to see him. He had always been on good terms with his boss. Mr. Mark told him, that the company was not doing as well in the poor economy and they would be forcing all employees to work seven days a week. He told Baruch that he understood that he was a religious Jew and that this would be hard on him, but he wanted Baruch to be one of the first to know.

Baruch finished work and made his way home at the end of the day and broke the terrible news to his wife. He refused to work on Shabbos and he would have to quit his job. He already knew many people who were out of work as it was, and looking to be off for Shabbos made it more difficult. Few people were able to start new jobs on Sunday, but were fired the next Sunday when they didn't show up to work on Shabbos. How was he going to find work?

### **The Children Went To Sleep Starving**

Slowly, their small meals became even smaller and most nights the children went to sleep starving. Day after day Baruch went on interviews, but with all the same result: no job unless you work on Shabbos. One night, Baruch and Rochel made the horrible decision for Boruch to go to work on Shabbos, because they simply could not survive anymore. They rationalized that this was a case of Pikuach Nefesh because the children were suffering so much, and their very lives were likely at risk.

The next morning, Baruch got on a train to go find a job where he would work on Shabbos. Suddenly he burst into tears and his hands began to tremble. He had forgotten about his promise to the Chofetz Chaim! Baruch got off the train at the

next stop, turned back the other way, and went home. Through tears, he told his wife of his promise, so many years earlier. Rochel started to cry herself, and said how much she regretted the decision, saying that the suffering of the children affected her.

### **A Knock at the Door**

They were sitting at the table thinking of what to do to somehow make ends meet, when there was a knock at the door. Baruch opened his door and was surprised to see Mr. Mark, his old boss standing there and asked if he could come in. He said he came to apologize. Mr. Mark explained that he had a partner who didn't like religious Jews very much. He said that the most important thing to a Jew is money, and if put under a little pressure, their religion would be tossed out the window. Mr. Mark disagreed, and they made a bet that they would pick one Jew in the company to test.



They picked Baruch because he had grown in the company and he stood to lose more than others. Mr. Mark said to Baruch: “You won the bet. You didn't give in to the pressure and agree to work on Shabbos.” He then took out an envelope from his briefcase and gave it to Baruch. It contained a fortune of \$1,000. He also gave Baruch a promotion and made him manager of his branch in the company.

After Mr. Mark left, Baruch and Rochel cried tears of joy, astounded at how close they had come to being Mechalel Shabbos. Baruch attributed it all to his Rebbe, the Chofetz Chaim, and his powerful influence and hand shake from so many years ago!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

# What About Me? Or Learning from Jack!

By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon



**Rabbi Mendel Gluckowsky**

*On the last day of Pesach, our custom [in Lubavitch] is to partake in a special seudah (meal) beginning after Mincha, and many extend it past sunset. The Rebbe Rashab publicized this tradition in 5666 (1906) and informed us that it is called The Meal of Moshiach, and we are to drink four cups of wine.*

*This year I participated in this meal, where Rabbi Mendel Gluckowsky, the Rov of Rechovot, Eretz Yisroel farbrenged (spoke) and he related the following touching and inspiring story. With his permission I am publicizing it.*

*[To give some context to the story, Rabbi Gluckowsky grew up in Toronto, and maintained contact with many of his friends and acquaintances. This continued even after even after he settled in Eretz Yisroel and became a Rov etc. One of them is the focus of this story, a man by the name Jack, who learned his bar mitzvah lessons from Rabbi Gluckowsky's father, Rabbi Yaakov.]*

*I hope you too will be motivated by it.*

While my position as a Rov brings me to many communities, I made it a point to visit Toronto very often, in order to visit my parents. While I was there, I also reconnected with numerous friends and acquaintances. As my responsibilities in Eretz Yisroel increased, I also would do some fundraising there for the numerous causes I am involved in. Many of my friends and acquaintances helped me in this endeavor as well

Amongst them is a wonderful person, Jack. He wasn't a neighbor, nor a person with whom I went to school with, but rather someone who took his bar mitzvah lessons from my father. Nevertheless, we connected and remained close for many years. While his family is traditional, he would constantly ask me about the Lubavitcher Rebbe and

insist that I share with him something that the Rebbe spoke about. It was the early nineties, and when we spoke that year, it was shortly after the Kinus Hashiluchim, so I mentioned to him that the Rebbe said, “Everyone has to prepare themselves and be ready to greet Moshiach.”

Hearing this he said, Rabbi I just moved into a new house and I don't want Moshiach to catch me in pajamas, i.e., that I was sleeping on the job and didn't do anything to prepare myself for his coming. Rabbi I want mezuzos for my house, as soon as possible.

I asked him, Jack, how many doorways to you have? He was silent for a few moments as he mentally counted them, and then replied twenty-six.

### **A Proper Mezuzah at That Time Cost \$75**

Jack, a proper mezuzah [at that time] is seventy-five dollars, should I get them? Without a question, he replied. I definitely want one on each doorway.

Could I come over at nine tomorrow morning, I inquired?

That would be wonderful and I would be extremely grateful if you do.

Hearing this, I left my parents' house and drove to a sofer, whom I knew and asked him to prepare the twenty-six mezuzos, their coverings, as well as the nails etc., that I would need to place and attach them to the doorposts.

The following morning, I brought all of the mezuzos to his house and helped him place them on the doorposts. After placing the final one, I saw that Jack was extremely uplifted, he then declared, Thank you, Moshiach will not find me in my pajamas, I prepared my house for his coming.

After speaking with him for a few more minutes, I left and began driving back to my parent's home and he went to his work.

### **Struck Me Like a Thunderbolt!**

Suddenly after driving a block or two, I was overwhelmed with the following thought and it struck me like a thunderbolt. Jack, is not a Lubavitcher, he is not a chossid etc., yet, as soon as he heard these words of the Rebbe he made a momentous decision that changed his life-style. He felt a need to do something to prepare himself for Moshiach's coming.

But what about me? Yes, I learn and teach the Rebbe's sichos and maamorim, as well as being active in the Rebbe's institutions and activities. But, did I change anything in my life or perspective? Did I do something just for the sake of preparing myself for the coming of Moshiach? Or as Jack said it so poignantly, Am I going to be dressed when Moshiach comes, or will he find me in my pajamas?

In simple words, did anything in my daily routine change before I heard those words of the Rebbe or not?!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos 5784 Weekly Story of Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon.*