

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS VAYEITZE 5783

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In Praise of Melamdim (Teachers of Young Children)



The Rebbe Reshab and his son the Frierdiker Rebbe

In his diary, the Frierdiker Rebbe (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, 1880-1950) records a trip with [his father] the Rebbe Rashab (Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn, 1860-1920) from Lubavitch to their vacation home in Serebrinka: From far off, we can see two travelers sitting at the side of the road. As we come closer, I recognize Reb Peretz and Reb Menachem Mendel, the melamdim of Beshenkovitz.

I told this to my father, and he instructed the wagon driver to slow down and drive close to where they were sitting. As we passed them, we beheld a beautiful sight: Under a shady tree, the two chassidim sat with their tallis katan and yarmulkes showing, and their jackets, hats, shoes and walking sticks beside them.

Reb Menachem Mendel, his eyes closed, was leaning on his elbows which he supported with his thighs. He was listening as Reb Peretz, whose eyes were also closed, repeated a maamar in the distinctive singsong of Chassidus. And like any scholar deeply engrossed in Talmudic debate, he highlighted certain phrases by gesturing freely.

My father instructed the driver to stop for a few minutes, and the chassidim did not notice us. When we continued, my father told me that they were reviewing the maamar that begins, *Mi madad beshaaló mayim* that he had delivered on the second day of Shavuot.

The sight of the two chassidim apparently made a strong impression on my father. As we passed the town of Rudnya, he said to me: “Five thousand, six hundred and sixty years, nine months, thirteen days, fifteen hours and so many minutes, that little plot of land has been waiting for Peretz and Mendel to come along and share words of Torah. And by doing that, they fulfilled the sublime will of HaShem.

“It is hard to assess the pleasure that this elicits On High, or to describe how envious the malochim are of these Beshenkovitzer melamdim. The Rebbeim in Gan Eden are rejoicing with such grandchildren.

“Chassidische melamdim are the true luminaries of Yiddische homes. They are the Avraham Avinu’s of every generation who diffuse Elokus into every home. The Mittlerer Rebbe would show more affection to the melamdim than to the rabbonim, and would say: ‘It is the melamdim who turn Yidden into vessels to absorb G-dliness!’ ”)

The Mittlerer Rebbe held melamdim in high esteem and often related to them with deference. Nevl was always known as a chassidische town, the home of many chassidim who were dedicated to Chassidus and avoda, and on this the Mittlerer Rebbe once said, “Who turned Nevl into a chassidische town? Not its rabbonim not its other scholars, but its melamdim!”

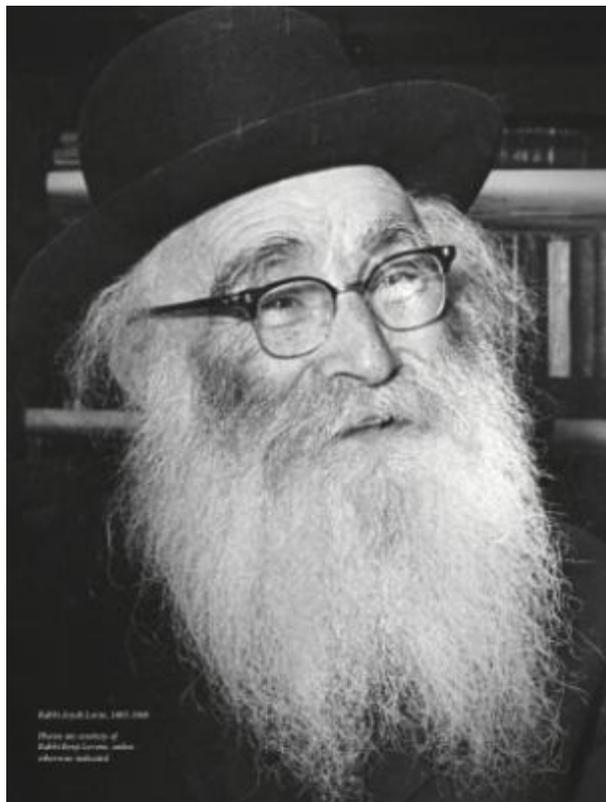
Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5782 email of The Weekly Farbrengen.

Special Gift in the Yichud Room

Someone once asked the Gaon, R’ Eliyahu Lopian zt”l, just how long do Chazal’s words apply when they say (Pirkei D’Rav Eliezer) that a chosson is “Domeh L’melech” - a groom is like a king. Is it during the engagement, the night

of the wedding, only for the week of sheva berachos, the first thirty days, or maybe even for the entire first year?

R' Elya replied, "As long as the chosson reveres his kallah and treats her like a queen, that is as long as he is considered a king!"



Rabbi Aryeh Levine, zt"l

The Tzaddik from Yerushalayim, R' Aryeh Levine zt"l was such a person - he was a genuine king, based on the way he treated and revered his Rebbetzin as a queen. There is a well-known story related about how he once went with his wife to their family doctor for a check-up, and after the doctor received them with honor and respect. he asked why they came that day.

R' Aryeh replied, "We came to the honorable doctor because our foot hurts us." The doctor was noticeably confused; which foot was he to examine? Hers? His? Both? R' Aryeh smiled and said, "My wife's foot hurts us both!"

Another story is told by Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky a"h, the granddaughter of R' Aryeh Levine, about this wonderful mindset. She related as follows: "My holy Zaida was orphaned from a young age. He lived overseas and had a difficult life, with no money or financial support as he wandered from yeshivah to yeshivah.

When it came time for him to marry, Hashem arranged a most wonderful shidduch for him with a truly exceptional kallah. After the chuppah, in the yichud room, R' Aryeh turned to his new kallah and told her very warmly and wholeheartedly, 'My precious wife, the custom is to give the kallah a special gift in the cheder yichud, and from the depths of my heart I so much wanted to give you a gift. Unfortunately, as you know, I have absolutely no means with which to purchase such a gift.

"It is painful to me to be unable to buy you something special. Therefore, my request is that you accept this gift from me, a gift that did not require any funds in order to purchase. Here is my gift: I accept upon myself to always be mevater, to always give in and acquiesce to all of your wishes. This gift should last for the duration of our lives! I will always let you do as you wish!"

"My grandmother was overcome with emotion. Her eyes filled with tears of gratitude, happiness and joy over such a magnificent gift, from her magnificent chosson. Instantly, she turned to him and replied, 'My dear chosson, if this is your gift to me, then I too, would like to give you the same exact gift: everything in our home should always run according to the way you feel it would be most beneficial!'

With this approach towards one another, it is no wonder that R' Aryeh and his wife lived together for so many wonderful, good years, always being mevater one to the other. They built a home and family that was a model example of Torah and middos tovos, a home in which there lived a true king and queen.

And they were zoche to merit having their daughters marry wonderful Gedolei Yisroel: Hagaon R' Shmuel Aharon Yudelevitch zt"l, Hagaon R' Eliezer Palchinsky zt"l, and my own father-in-law, the Gaon and Posek Hador, R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l."

Reprinted from the Parshas Chaya Sara 5783 edition of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman's Torah Tavlin

Looking for Friedman

A young woman once came to the Chazon Ish zt"l crying that she's been in shidduchim for two years and has been rejected by everyone. "Rebbi, what am I doing wrong? Am I completely worthless?" she wailed in despair.

The Chazon Ish, in a warm and calming tone, replied as follows: "Suppose you are looking for the Friedman family at 100 Rechov Rabbi Akiva. It is a four-story building with eight apartments on both sides. In Bnei Brak, there are rarely any numbers on the buildings and the mailboxes are old and rusty, making it hard to

recognize which families are living there. But you ask around until you find the right building and then you walk carefully up the dimly lit staircase.”



The Chazon Ish

The Chazon Ish let the scenario sink in, and then continued: “So you go to the first apartment, knock, and ask: Is this the Friedman family? They say, ‘No, it is the Itzkovitz family. The Friedmans live on the 4th floor. There are two families on that level - their door is the one to the right.’

“Suppose you get enraged and start crying, why are you not Friedman? I need Friedman! Why are you not them?”

“‘Are you crazy?’ the Itzkovitz family will say, ‘why are you crying like that? We are the Itzkovitz family! Friedman is upstairs. Go upstairs and you’ll find Friedman.’”

“In the same way,” the Chazon Ish concluded, “those other boys who rejected you are not yours. Because your zivug is not by ‘Itzkovitz’. It is by ‘Friedman’. Don’t despair. There are thousands of families out there, but there is only one address for Friedman. When it comes to finding your ‘Friedman’ he will run to the right address to find you.”

Reprinted from the Parshas Chaya Sara 5783 edition of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavlin

The Rebbetzin's Promise



In Cheshvon, 2008, Rebbetzin Baty Kanievsky, a”h, had just returned from a wedding, and she wanted to publicize the story that was the backdrop for this wedding.

Four years earlier, a terrible accident had occurred on the highway, which severely injured a fifteen-year-old girl, R”L. She was rushed to the hospital, where she lay unconscious for two weeks. This was in addition to the many injuries that she sustained. Her parents approached Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt”l, and his Rebbetzin, and asked them to please Daven for their daughter.

They Davened, and Hashem responded favorably, as the girl woke up and began to recognize her family. The joy was profound! They had Davened for a miracle, and Hashem sent them one! The first thing the girl wanted to know when she woke up was, “Imma, how long was I in a coma?”

The mother didn’t want her to know just yet that she had unconscious for so long, as she was afraid of the shock it would cause and the effect it would have on her recovery, so she replied, “What difference does that make right now? The main thing is that you are alive and you are doing so well!”

Everyone there was shaken by the girl’s response. She said, “Two weeks before the accident, I accepted on myself to learn two Halachos every day from the Sefer Chofetz Chaim on Hilchos Lashon Hara. I want to make up what I missed.”

This girl was still facing a long recovery with numerous procedures and much rehabilitation, and they were still not sure of her outcome. Yet, this is all she was thinking about— making up the lost time from her Shemiras HaLashon study program.

Rav Chaim and his Rebbetzin were greatly impressed by this girl's devotion, and the Rebbetzin ensured the parents that she would dance with their daughter at her wedding, which at the time, was merely a dream. No one could even imagine it!

Eventually, this girl finally left the hospital, and made a miraculous and complete recovery. In just a short time, she resumed her regular schedule. She was a completely healthy girl, and had no sign whatsoever of her injuries! The Rebbetzin said, "I have just returned from this girl's wedding, where I have fulfilled my promise to dance with her!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5783 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.

The Old Man's Check

By Rabbi David Bibi

A true story regarding this topic once occurred in Pressburg, Hungary, recounted by Hagaon Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt"l and well-known by the Hungarian immigrants in Jerusalem of one generation ago.

There was an affluent and respected couple that lived in Pressburg. In addition to the large sums of money they donated to Tzedakah, they would make a special donation to the Yeshiva of Pressburg to recite Kaddish for Jewish souls who did not have anyone to recite Kaddish on their behalf.

The Widow Loses All Her Money

A while later, the husband passed away and his widow remained alone and was not able to properly run the family business. She eventually lost all her money and assets, and she became severely impoverished, living in cramped quarters with her adult daughters that did not yet marry. She could not even afford to marry off her daughters in the simplest way possible.

There was one thing that hurt this widow tremendously and that was the Kaddish. She knew that those forgotten Jewish souls always had great merit because someone was reciting Kaddish on their behalf. However, now that she could no longer make donations to the Yeshiva so that arrangement had stopped.

She therefore gathered the courage and made her way to the Yeshiva office. She requested that the arrangement continue and that when she would G-d-willing get back on her feet financially, she would repay her obligations to the Yeshiva boys who were reciting the Kaddish. The administrators of the Yeshiva agreed to her request.

She left the Yeshiva with tears in her eyes and suddenly, she saw an old man. The elderly man asked her, “Why are you sad?” They began conversing and she divulged her bitter tale and how her older daughters were unable to get married.

The Man Offers to Write a Check to Marry Off the Woman’s Daughters

The man asked her how much money she needed to marry off her daughters in a respectable manner. The widow replied with a large amount. The elderly man said, “I shall write you a check, but I require trustworthy witnesses that I am giving you this amount.” The man entered the Yeshiva and came out with two young men, in the presence of whom he signed the check. Amazed at this turn of events, the woman returned home.

The next morning, the widow went to the bank to deposit the check. Since the amount of the check was so astronomical, the tellers called over the bank manager to make sure everything was being executed properly. As soon as the manager saw the check, he turned pale and fainted on the spot. The poured some cold water on his face to revive him and when he came to, he asked the woman, “Who gave you this check?” The woman replied, “An elderly man I met in the street yesterday.”

The Bank Manager’s Photograph

The manager entered his office and returned with a photograph. He asked the widow, “Is the man in this picture the one who gave you the check yesterday?” She excitedly replied in the affirmative.

The bank manager raised his voice and exclaimed, “This is my father who passed away many years ago. Last night, he came to me in a dream and said that he had no rest in the in Upper Realms because I, his son, had married a non-Jewish woman and certainly had not recited Kaddish on his behalf. He was extremely disturbed in his grave until a woman came and arranged for Kaddish to be recited on his behalf. My father therefore instructed me to get up quickly and pay his debt to this woman.” The bank manager immediately paid in full the entire amount of the check from his own money.

We see how great it is and how much one merits in Heaven by leaving children in this world who continue the sacred legacy of the Jewish nation.

Reprinted from the Parashat Lech Lecha 5783 email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

The Rabbi Who Was Thrown into Prison

By Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

There was once a Rabbi in Chernobyl named Rav Nahum who devoted a tremendous amount of time and effort to help people who were thrown in jail by anti-semitic rulers. He would travel great distances in order to raise funds for redeeming the prisoners. Once when he was far from home in a foreign city, the locals made some false accusations against him to the government, and he was arrested and put in prison.

While he was in jail, he was trying to understand why Hashem would do this to him. “I dedicate so much of my life to this mission of freeing Jewish prisoners. Why didn’t this zechut protect me from being thrown in jail myself?”

There was another Jew there who offered an explanation. “We know that Abraham Abinu excelled in the misvah of hesed, and he did everything he could to make his guests comfortable. But he always wondered if there was any more that he could do to help his guests even more. When Hashem told him, “Lech Lecha,” – leave your homeland and go to a strange place, he was able to get a greater understanding of the difficulties that a traveler experiences. He was then able to use that new perspective to raise his misvah of helping guests to an even greater level.”

“Perhaps,” the man continued, “Hashem saw how much you love and excel in the misvah of helping prisoners, so He wanted to show you firsthand how it feels to be in jail. You can now relate to the suffering that the prisoners are experiencing even more than before, and this will help you to enhance and intensify your efforts to help them.”

None of us wish to go through difficult times, but at one time or another, each of us finds himself in a situation that may cause us pain, stress or discomfort. As we struggle to overcome it, we should pay attention to the way we are feeling at that moment, and store that memory in our minds. We will then be far more equipped to empathize with someone else who is faced with a similar situation, and then with that memory of our own experience, we may even be able to help him get through it.

It will also make it much easier for us to cope with our own trials and tribulations when we view them as learning experiences that will help us to assist others more effectively. Many organizations have been created by people who went

through a crisis in their own lives, and through that hardship, they came to understand how much other people must be struggling in similar circumstances. Rather than focus only on themselves, they set up support groups to help others.

Challenges are part of life but they don't have to bring us down. It's all a matter of how we view the situation. If we complain about our hardships every step of the way, we won't accomplish anything. But if we use the experience of our painful situation to gain a better understanding of the suffering of others, we can elevate ourselves and the lives of others as well.

Reprinted from the Parashat Lech Lecha 5783 email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

Orders From Above

As Told to Penina Pinchasi



Photo Credit: Flash90

Until recently traveling by bus from Kiryat Sefer to the *charedi* moshav Tifrach in the south of Israel, involved a long journey during the week. Travelers needed to get a bus to Jerusalem or Bnei Brak and change there, involving hours of travel. The only direct buses were on Friday and *Motzei* Shabbos.

But since the opening of several popular simcha halls in Kiryat Sefer, buses now travel between the two localities almost every evening to bring people to the *smachot* and return them home later on.

Avi's mother had attended a friend's wedding and had left her two daughters at the hall still enjoying the dancing. She had taken a detour to see her son and his family who lived in Kiryat Sefer before making her way to the bus station to catch the last bus back to the moshav with her daughters.

The Daughters are on the Wrong Bus

Avi accompanied her to the bus stop and they chatted as they waited for the teenagers to arrive and for the bus to fill up. There was still another ten minutes until it was due to leave.

The minutes went by and Avi started to check his watch concerned. Suddenly his sister called him, "We're on the wrong bus – we aren't going to get to the central bus station for another 15 minutes. You have to hold the bus up."

Avi rushed over to the driver and asked him to please just wait an extra few minutes until his sisters arrived.

"No way – I have to leave on time."

Avi called his sister back, "Change buses and go to our house. You're not going to get here on time and the driver won't wait so you'll spend the night with us and go home tomorrow."

The Mother Has to Get Home that Night with Her Daughter Yaffa

"No, I can't. I have to get home tonight. And in any case you know that Yaffa will be totally disconcerted and she'll be in a terrible state if we don't go home."

Yaffa was their sister who had Down's Syndrome and Avi knew it was not a good idea to tell her there was a change of plans as she needed the security of her mother and her home.

Avi tried to appeal to the bus driver once more but to no avail. He was determined to leave on time.

But oddly enough he still hadn't moved even though it was already several minutes past the allotted time.

Avi had no idea why he hadn't moved off but he quickly called his sister back and said, "Stay on the bus and run over here quickly when you arrive. Although he says he's not waiting he hasn't actually driven off yet."

Avi saw that the station inspector was standing by the bus and he was apparently stopping the bus from moving off. Had he heard their conversation and felt sorry for Avi's sisters? It was not likely as he hadn't been there at the time when Avi had spoken to the driver.

Eventually his sisters' bus pulled up and the two girls ran over to the Tifrach bus. Yaffa was welcomed into her mother's arms and the three of them settled down in their seats.

A minute later the inspector waved the bus off and it set off on its way. Avi stood there baffled. He walked over to the inspector.

"Tell me, why did you stop the bus leaving on time?"
He shrugged his shoulders. "I really don't know. I got orders from above," he said pointing upwards, "telling me not to let the bus go until he gave his OK. So that's what I did."

Avi smiled – it's possible the inspector's definition of 'above' and Avi's weren't exactly the same. But Avi knew for sure just where the call had come from.

Reprinted from the November 13, 2022 website of The Jewish Press

Time to Jump Off A Moving Train

Reb Yehudah of Nasod zt'l was once on a train in a private compartment, and an old woman came aboard. Fearing the prohibition of yichud, the Rav jumped off the moving train.

His students asked him, "Why were you moser nefesh? What were you afraid of? She's an old woman!"

He replied, "I wasn't afraid of her. I was afraid of the aveirah of yichud."

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5783 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

The Tricky Yetzer Hara

Chassidim would come to The Koznitzer Magid zt'l to receive counsel and his brachos, but he didn't admit women to his room. Once, when the gabbai wasn't around, an elderly woman arrived. Not knowing the court's customs, she entered the Koznitzer Magid's room.

The Koznitzer Magid hurried to the window and was ready to jump out. Fortunately, just then, the gabbai returned and prevented the Koznitzer Magid from jumping.

Later, the gabbai asked, "The woman was old, and you're ill. What were you afraid of? Why did you have to risk your life and jump out of the window?"

The Koznitzer Magid replied, "When the yetzer hara takes control, he can make an old woman appear young and a sick person healthy."

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5783 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

The Yeshiva Bachur's Kabbalah for His Eyes

A yeshiva bachur in Yerushalayim made a kabbalah one Elul that he won't leave the yeshiva for the entire month, so his eyes will stay pure. But during Elul, he developed a rash, and his parents wanted him to see a doctor.

"I'll go after Elul," he told his parents, not wanting to compromise his kabbalah.

The parents spoke with the rosh yeshiva Reb Yehudah Cohen Shlita and expressed their concern. The next morning, after shacharis, the rosh yeshiva called over the bachur and told him to go to a doctor, as his parents requested.

The bachur began to cry. The rosh yeshiva realized how sincere the bachur was in his resolve, so he said, "Come to me this afternoon. I have to think this through."

That afternoon, a doctor from Brazil came to the yeshiva. He said to the rosh yeshiva, "I saw you at a chasunah last week, and I'm concerned about a blotch I saw on your skin. I came to make certain that everything is well."

After the examination, the doctor concluded that the rosh yeshiva was fine. The rosh yeshiva thanked him and asked him if he can look at one of the bachurim in the yeshiva who had a terrible rash but refused to see a doctor because of his kabbalah.

The doctor agreed to see the bachur, and prescribed a specific ointment, which by hashgachah pratis, the doctor had with him. The lesson we learn from this story is that when a person desires to be holy, Hashem will help him.

One elderly Yid said on his deathbed that he isn't afraid of the judgment in heaven because he guarded his eyes. He described how he did it:

"When I walked down a street guarding my eyes, I considered it like I earned five dollars. If it was a bigger street, I counted it like I earned ten dollars. And if it was a major street, and I guarded my eyes, I considered it like I earned twenty dollars. At the end of the day, I calculated how much 'money' I earned, and I would calculate how much money I earned over the years. I have earned so much money over the years that I consider myself a mutltimillionaire.

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5783 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

Honesty is Not the Best Policy?

By Daniel Keren

Rabbi Shlomi Farhi, the Rabbi of the Edmond J Safra Synagogue in the Upper East Side of Manhattan near the Central Park Zoo in a recent podcast, recalled that many years ago, there was a very wealthy and powerful man who got up to speak in his father's shul in Deal, New Jersey. "My father introduced him and this man began by declaring "rabbotai (gentlemen), honesty is not the best policy."

Everybody is looking at my father, the rabbi and wondering "What is happening here?"

The man then repeated – "honesty is not the best policy. Honesty is the only policy.! You don't have any other options! You want to know how I became successful in business? By never messing over anybody. My word was 100% bankable. You didn't need a contract when doing business with me.

"Yes, there were a few times when I lost out on some deals. My honesty meant that mine was not the lowest bid. But you want to know what happened next?. People instead of giving me the business would take someone else's lowest bid because it was cheaper.

"But then they discovered that the other person, my competitor was a liar. He gave them a point lower than my bid but they paid dearly for it when they had to sit down at the business table with him.

"So, the next time, they gave me the job and once I fulfilled my part of the bargain, they stayed with me forever. Therefore, I can declare that honesty is not the best policy. It is the only policy."

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