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Eggs-emplary Behavior

By Rabbi Yosef Weiss



A survivor of the flames of the Holocaust, R' Shmuel Grunbaum left war-torn Europe and emigrated to America, where he made a home for himself in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. After various attempts to find a job, R' Shmuel found a position working in an egg store. It was a dependable job, but the salary was minimal. R' Shmuel had to devise an additional means of income.

Building on his current position, R' Shmuel began an innovative service: he would sell and deliver eggs directly to the customer. Business began slowly, with an order here and an order there. Word of R' Shmuel's prompt and ethical business spread, and soon R' Shmuel received his first weekly customer.

One afternoon, R' Shmuel was busy making his scheduled deliveries. He walked up the narrow flight of steps and carefully placed the carton of eggs on the doorstep of his weekly customer. R' Shmuel walked down the steps and began making his way down the street. Quite unexpectedly, there was a tap on his shoulder.

"Excuse me, can you help us make a minyan for minhah?" The man motioned toward the basement entrance of the building R' Shmuel had just left.

"Certainly, I will join you."

Within a few minutes, the afternoon service commenced. Their small minyan of ten grew as the prayers progressed. All proceeded normally until the middle of the hazan's recitation of the prayers.

A sudden movement at one side of the shul caught R' Shmuel's attention. A man was entering the low-ceilinged shul with a large carton in his hands. R' Shmuel had no trouble recognizing the carton - it contained the eggs he had just delivered!

R' Shmuel watched in confusion as the man circulated the room. Each person took a few eggs from the carton and put them aside until the end of minhah.

When his turn came, R' Shmuel waved the man on, indicating that he had no need for eggs. He looked at the eggs in the man's hand, then stared around the shul. Each man there was now the proud possessor of one or two eggs.

R' Shmuel was flabbergasted. What was the reason for this strange ritual?

When the services were over, R' Shmuel approached the man with the now empty carton. "Tell me, where does this custom come from - to give out eggs during prayers?"

The man smiled at his puzzled expression. "This is the Skwere shteibel," he explained. "The Rebbetzin, who lives upstairs, wanted to support a fellow in the wholesale eggs business. She places a weekly order, but she doesn't really need so many eggs. So, she asked me to give them out to the minyan so they won't go to waste. Understand? It's as simple as that."

R' Shmuel nodded thoughtfully. "Oh yes," he said fervently, "I understand a lot better than you think."

R' Shmuel thanked the man and ascended the stairs into the waning sunlight. His burden had been lightened by the discreet concern of the Rebbetzin of Skwere. (Excerpted from the book – "Visions of Greatness VII")

Reprinted from the Parshat Mikeitz 5786 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

Only When Every Avenue Has Failed



A young man in Eretz Yisrael was desperate for employment. Despite his education, he sent out dozens of resumes and attended interview after interview, only to face rejection at every turn. Months passed, and his savings dwindled.

In despair, he turned to his rebbe for guidance.

The rebbe told him, “You are not unemployed; you are being employed by Hashem to learn bitachon. The minute you absorb that lesson, the true position destined for you will appear.”

Shortly thereafter, the young man received a phone call from a company to which he had never even applied. They had seen his name through a friend of a friend, and they offered him a position tailor-made for his skills. The job turned out to be far better than any of the opportunities he had previously pursued.

Looking back, the young man understood: had one of the earlier “doors” opened, he might have thought his own efforts had borne fruit. Only when every avenue had been shut tight could he truly appreciate that his salvation came directly from Above.

This is the eternal message of Yosef HaTzadik. The prison doors did not open until the exact moment that Hashem decreed. And when they did, Yosef was not simply released; he was elevated to the position of viceroy of Egypt. Salvation is not merely escape from difficulty; it is the hand of Hashem guiding us to a destiny greater than we could have envisioned.

Reprinted from the Parshas Mikeitz 5786 email of Peninim on the Torah compiled and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum, a publication of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland.

Smile!

By Aharon Spetner



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

Rehov Malchei Yisroel, Yerushalayim

“Shalom! Why are you not smiling?”

A dejected-looking fellow walking down Rechov Malchei Yisroel looked up in confusion at the strange-looking man walking in his direction. Carrying a small shovel, one side of his beard shorter than the other, and a large white “Tzadi” on his beaten hat, the man looked like nobody he had ever seen.

“Hi, I’m Tzadok Hatzadik!” the strange man said. “Don’t you know it’s a big segulah to be happy?”

“It is? How can I be happy when I just lost my job?”

“I’m going to help you get a new job!” Tzadok answered. “What’s your name?”

“My name is Tzachi. But how are you going to get me a job?”

“Oh, Tzachi, if you only knew half of the segulot that I know. Why, I can even make you your own custom segulah to get you the perfect job!”

Tzachi’s eyes lit up. “Really? My own segulah? You must be so holy! (Tzadok nodded) Harav Tzadok, will you be my rebbe?”

“Of course!” Tzadok kissed Tzachi on the forehead. “Come along, my talmid. Let me teach you the secrets of the Universe.”

As they walked, Tzadok regaled Tzachi with stories about the many mofsim he had almost performed. Suddenly, Tzadok stopped.

“What’s wrong?” asked Tzachi.

Tzadok didn’t answer. He just stood staring at some blonde strands which were sticking out from the stones between two buildings.

“What is it?” Tzachi asked.

Tzadok shook his head. “Rav Volender said no,” he muttered to himself.

“What is it?” Tzachi repeated.

“It’s just that I thought, maybe, it...” Tzadok’s voice trailed off momentarily.

“It’s silly. I thought those might be the hairs of Bilaam’s donkey...”

“THE HAIRS OF BILAAM’S DONKEY????” exclaimed Tzachi. “Wouldn’t that be like the best segulah ever?”

Tzadok nodded. “It would be,” he said quietly. “It would be a segulah to save people from ever having to go to jail. Do you know how much we could sell it for?”

“So, what are we waiting for?” asked Tzachi, bending down to smell the blonde strands. “It does smell like a donkey.”

“You think so???” Tzadok said, excitedly. “Really?”

Tzadok bent down and sniffed. “It does! This is really it! I finally found it! The hairs of Bilaam’s donkey!”

Quickly, Tzadok and Tzachi got busy loosening the stones with the shovel in an attempt to free the “donkey hairs”.

Several hours later

CLANG!

“Thanks, Yigal!” Tzadok said cheerfully, as the guard slammed shut the door of the jail cell.

“Oy, what have I done?” Tzachi said, his head in his hands.

“Hi Yuval! Hi Boris! Hi Kobi!” Tzadok called out as other prisoners walked past.

“Oy this is terrible! Why do bad things happen to me?” Tzachi sat there on the bed in the cell, looking more miserable than ever.”

“What’s wrong, Tzachi?” Tzadok asked with a huge smile.

“I’ve never been to jail before,” Tzachi said, a tear trickling down his cheek.

“So what? I come here all the time. There’s nothing wrong with going to jail. Even Yosef Hatzadik went to jail. And you think he was sad in jail? No way! He was the happiest man there.”

“Good evening, Tzadok.”

Tzadok jumped to attention at the sound of Rav Volender, the prison rov.

“Kavod Harav!” Tzadok said.

“Tzadok, I just heard what you told your friend over here.”

“He’s my talmid, rebbe.”

“Uh yes, sure. But there is something wrong with going to jail! You are in jail once again for something that you should NOT have done. How many times do we have to talk about how there is nothing special about the hairs of Bilaam’s donkey?

“However, what you said about smiling is absolutely correct. Yosef Hatzadik was thrown into jail for something he did not do (unlike you, Tzadok). “Yet, even though he was treated so unfairly, he smiled at everyone and kept a positive attitude. No matter how bad things seem, a Yid should always be happy and smiling. As Rav Yisroel Salanter said, ‘your face is a reshus harabim’. When you frown, it makes other people sad. And when you smile at others, it makes them happy. And that’s why it is so important for a Yid to always have a pleasant look on his face.”

As Rav Volender walked away, Tzadok turned to Tzachi.

“See? And why do you think the Sar Hamashkim felt comfortable sharing his dream with Yosef? Because Yosef was a nice, cheerful person. And that led to Yosef getting out of jail through the Sar Hamashkim. I told you smiling is a huge segulah!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Mikeitz 5786 email of Toras Avigdor Junior base on the Torah teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.

Two Inspiring Stories of the Stoliner Rebbe

By Yehuda Z Klitnick

On the 7th of Av 5660 1900, the Rebbe Reb Yochonon Perlow was born, the sixth son of Reb Yisrael of Stolin, the heilige Frankfurter, and to the Rebbetzin Brocha Shaindel. At the bris he was named Yochonon, after his zeide Reb Yochonon of Rochmostrivsk. The Frankfurter told his Rebbetzin “Having brought such a Neshome to this world is enough.”

The Rebbe used to travel with another person, to a certain town and stayed at a hotel that was owned by a widow and her son. The owners did not know who the guest were. The son saw that the guest was a heilige person, especially after he requested a private room to eat in. And he asked that my mother personally prepare his food for him. Still, we didn't know who he was.

“On one of their visits,” the son said, “My mother prepared everything he asked for. When they were ready to leave, he paid for his stay, and said to my mother, ‘Is there something you need help, or need a favor? I am ready to do for you anything we can.’”

“My mother answered, ‘We suffer from the ruler of this city, who constantly creates libels and accusations against us, and we can't take it.’”

The guest asked her, ‘How many candles do you light on Erev Shabbos?’ She told him how many.

He told her, ‘This Shabbos, light an extra candle. When that candle goes out, so will the ruler.’”

The man left the hotel with his escort, and I also went along to escort him.

“On Erev Shabbos my mother lit an extra candle, and said the bracha with more kavanah than usual. When we finished our seudah on Shabbos night, the candle began to give out its last light. All of a sudden, we heard a terrible cry from outside. We went out to see what the matter was, and we saw that the ruler had fallen off his horse. When we returned to our house we saw that the additional light had died, and so had the ruler.”

“I happened to notice that there was a man in the street who was staring at the guest. He hurried up to catch up to him. Finally, the man in the street said to me, ‘Do you know who that man is? That's the Stoliner Rebbe from Loitzk!’ That's when I realized who had visited our hotel. It really made my mother happy to find that out. It was amazing how they hid their identities from us.

15th of Sh'vat, (1948)

Heals a Blind boy

R' Dovid Freind told this story. A customer of his had only one son, that contracted an eye disease. It had affected his whole face, and turned it black. Doctors were working hard to find a way to heal this boy. R' Dovid assured the father that when he next went to visit the [Stoliner] Rebbe he would mention the boy and ask the Rebbe to daven for him to get healed. They both agreed to that, so the next time R' Dovid went to see the Rebbe he mentioned the boy.

But the Rebbe didn't answer him. He mentioned the son to the Rebbe several times, but each time the Rebbe didn't answer him. One day the Rebbe asked R'

Dovid how the boy was doing and feeling. R' Dovid answered that the boy was not doing well at all, and the situation was dire.

The Rebbe asked him, “Does the boy’s mother keep Yiddishkeit?”

R' Dovid answered,

“She doesn’t believe in anything.”

The Rebbe said, “Ask her if she is ready to accept on herself the mitzvah of kindling lights every Erev Shabbos. If she is, then bring both parents to me.”

R' Dovid asked the parents, and the mother agreed to that condition. The parents traveled to New York and went in to see the Rebbe. The Rebbe told them, “Bring your son to such and such a doctor, here in New York.”

They went to the doctor with their son. The doctor examined the son, and told the parents, “I can heal your son, but it will be hard on all of us. It involves a very complicated operation, and it’s not certain he will be able to see again. And I must warn you, after the operation his eyes must be bandaged, and the bandages may not be taken off his eyes for at least 6 months. If you are prepared to do that, we can set a time for the operation.”

R' Dovid asked the Rebbe if he agreed to this. The Rebbe agreed, and a time was set for the operation. After the time was scheduled, the Rebbe told R' Dovid, “Immediately after the operation tell the parents to remove the bandage from the boy’s eyes, and they should immediately light a candle. And not only that, no one, not the parents, the boy, or R' Dovid, should speak about this until after it had happened.”

R' Dovid was confused by these instructions, but the Rebbe was firm. Before it came time for the operation, R' Dovid was careful that only his name should appear on the hospital documents, especially on the agreement to conduct the operation. The operation was on a Shabbos, and took six hours to perform. After it was finished they wheeled the boy away from the operating room into a room where he would stay for a while.

R' Dovid drew near and attempted to take the bandages off the boy’s eyes. The doctor resisted him, but R' Dovid showed him that he had signed all the papers, and it was therefore his privilege to take off the bandages. The doctor reluctantly agreed. So, R' Dovid removed the bandages, and lit a candle.

To the doctor’s and the parents’ astonishment, he asked the boy “What do you see?” And the child answered “A candle!” When the mother heard this she fainted. R' Dovid called up the Rebbe and told him the highlights of what had occurred. The Rebbe told him, “Come to shul in Williamsburg for Melave Malka. We will all wait for you.”

The chassidim waited in shul. They understood that the Rebbe was stretching out the time of Melave Malka beyond the norm, but they had no idea why. R' Dovid

finally arrived, and told the Rebbe the entire story from start to finish. When he was done, the Rebbe said to him, “Dovid, you see the entire oilam here? If they would know what I can do, they would have a completely different look at me and be better in Ruchniyus.”

The Rebbe, even though he was sick and weak, never gave up, and with his “last drop of blood”, as he said, built a foundation for our generation, as the Stoliner Chassidus flourishes. On the 21st day in Kislov 5716, at the young age of 56 the Rebbe passed away.

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeishev 5786 email of Pardes Yehuda.

The “Savior” of the Mir Yeshiva in Yerushalayim



Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz

During the Six Day War in Eretz Yisrael in 1967 the boys in the Mir Yeshiva took shelter in the dining room which was the lowest floor. But everyone was terrified that a bomb may fall on the Yeshiva roof and penetrate through till the dining room. After the war they checked the roof of the Yeshiva and found three bombs that had landed on the roof but never exploded. It was an open miracle.

The Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Chaim Shmulevitz gave a lecture in Yeshiva. “Do you think that it was in your merits that we had such a miracle? It wasn’t” the Rosh Yeshiva asked the boys. “I will tell you in whose merit we were saved,” he continued.

“Near the Yeshiva there is a lady who didn’t have a shelter in her building so she took shelter with all of us in the Yeshiva dining room. This lady is an Aguna. Her husband left her many years ago without giving her a divorce and therefore she was never able to get remarried. He left her with five small children and the oldest was only seven! No one can even imagine the suffering this poor lady has endured, left alone without any help or financial support.

She was sitting a few meters away from me and I heard her having a conversation with Hashem, and this is what she said:”

‘Ribbono Shel Olam, I am sure that on the day of judgment I have a very powerful claim against my husband who left me on my own with so many small children and no financial support. I have to go and work as a cleaning lady in order to make a bare minimum to support my family and provide them with food and the basics. I have no doubt that I would win the case and my husband would be found guilty.’

“But, Ribbono Shel Olam, let’s make a deal. I am willing to forgive my husband for everything he did to me and wipe out all the hard feelings, pain and suffering that I have in my heart against him, and you Hashem forgive us for all our sins, and we all come out of here alive and healthy.’

“You should know”” said Reb Chaim to the boys, “that lady’s prayers that came from such a broken heart and said with such sincerity, in her merit we were all saved.”

Reprinted from the Parshas Mikeitz 5786 email of Rabbi Dovid Caro’s Inspired by a Story.

Sacrificing a Medical Career for Yiddishkeit

The following amazing story before us happened in Russia in 2017 (exactly eight years ago) regarding a Jewish woman named Irena Dislevsky, who studied medicine for seven years, and then another seven years, specializing in head surgery. The law in Russia states that those who study medicine and complete their studies are entitled to receive a certificate, their medical degree.

However, these certificates are handed out on a specific day, and those who do not come to receive their certificate will have no further opportunity to receive it. Anyone who does not come to pick up the degree on that date loses eligibility for the certificate and must complete another seven years of medical studies in order to receive a new certificate.

Everyone in Russian medical schools knows that if he or she does not come to pick up the earned certificate on that specific date, they lose their chance to become a practicing doctor. Nobody failed to come on the appointed day to pick up their certificate. However, the date set for receiving the certificate for Irena Dislevsky fell out on Shavuot 2017.

It was precisely at that time that Irena Dislevsky began to become stronger in her commitment towards observing Torah and mitzvos, and for several months she had been observing Shabbos and Yom Tov. She was at a loss as to how she could get her certificate. In her distress, she turned to the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Rabbi Berel Lazar shlita, to ask him what to do.

The rabbi said to her, “Rent a room in a nearby hotel, and then you can walk over and pick up the certificate.”

She told the rabbi, “But I will have to sign all kinds of documents and paperwork confirming that I received the certificate.”

The rabbi told her, “If so, then I don’t see any halachic solution to allow the certificate to be picked up on Yom Tov.”

Her heart was broken within her; many years of hard work were about to go down the drain. But Irena refused to let the evil inclination break her. She became stronger and said to herself, “I have decided to keep Torah and mitzvos without compromise. I will not desecrate the sanctity of the festival for the sake of the certificate.”

The holiday arrived and the certificates were distributed. Irena Dislevsky did not go to receive her degree, and of course, she lost her opportunity. The day after the holiday, she tried to talk to the Russian Ministry of Education to request her certificate, but her pleas fell on deaf ears. She was told that she had lost her diploma, and to get a new one, she would have to go back and study for another seven years. She accepted it with love because she knew it was Hashem’s will.

In December 2018, a large conference was held in honor of the Hanukkah holiday at the Kremlin, the Russian parliament. On this important occasion, Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar lights the menorah and offers a few words about the holiday. President Vladimir Putin, who respects all religions, arrived at the lighting ceremony just as Rabbi Lazar was speaking.

The rabbi spoke about the self-sacrifice of the Hasmoneans, the few against the many, and the significance of self-sacrifice for the sake of Judaism. He added: “I want to tell you a story about one contemporary Hasmonean woman, who took upon herself the yoke of Torah and mitzvos with self-sacrifice, and stood up for the principles of Judaism, even at a great personal loss.”

He told of a woman who studied medicine for years, and all the labor of the past and all the hope of the future she gave away in order not to desecrate a Jewish

holiday. He concluded by saying: “Do you have a greater devotion than this for the sake of Judaism?”

President Putin heard this and was very moved. He called Rabbi Lazar over and asked him, “Is the story you told true? And if so, what is the name of that woman?”



Russian President Putin and Chief Rabbi of Russia Berel Lazar

Rabbi Lazar answered in the affirmative. “Irena Dislevsky is her name.”

The president bid farewell to Rabbi Lazar and left the scene. He immediately called the Minister of Education and said, “I ask that you bring me the medical certificate of Irena Dislevsky who was to have graduated back in June of this year.” Of course, a minister in Russia who receives such an order immediately carries out the president’s request.

President Putin received the certificate and asked that Irena Dislevsky be brought to him. Startled and scared, she arrived and was handed her certificate. To date, she is the only person in history to receive such a certificate from the Russian president. Shortly afterwards, she immigrated to the Holy Land and was hired to work as a deputy director of surgery in one of the large hospitals in Israel. (This story was published in a recent issue of the publication “Mei Be’er” by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Altman shlita

Reprinted from the Parshas Mikeitz 5786 email of Torah Tavlin.

Chaim's Advice to the Jewish Plumber



We still have the power of prayer that can change the details in the way that Hashem's plan will come about. A plumber came to fix one of The *Gadol Hador* Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky's pipes. After he finished, Reb Chaim quoted the *Pasuk* which tells us to pay our workers on time and happily paid the plumber for his service.

Then he gave him a lesson. He asked the plumber how does he pray for his *parnasa*, does he ask that other Jews should have plumbing problems so that he could have money?

The plumber was silent.

Reb Chaim told him, let me teach you how to pray for *parnasa*. You should say, "Hashem, if it has been decreed that someone must suffer, let it not be either physical or spiritual suffering, but only with a burst pipe or something of the sort. This way everyone will benefit, it's good for them and it's good for you."

Reprinted from the Parashat Miketz 5786 email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.

The Belzer Rebbe and His Chasid

A Chasid of Rav Yehoshua of Belz, zt”l, was having a hard time supporting his family. Someone suggested that he travel to America, where, it was reported that “the streets are paved with gold.”

The Chasid was afraid of taking such a step, since he had heard that the level of Ruchniyus in America was very weak at that time. He knew of many devout Jews who had traveled to America and abandoned the traditional Jewish lifestyle they used to live in Galicia, assimilating into American society. He was worried that the same thing might happen to him.

This Chasid asked his Rebbe for guidance. The Rebbe instructed him to travel to America. “However,” the Rebbe added, “I have one condition: I want you to write me a letter every week to tell me how you are doing there.”

The Chasid agreed to the condition and sailed off to America. At first, the Chasid’s letters to the Rebbe were filled with descriptions of the difficulties he was encountering. He wrote of his loneliness and how much he missed the bustling Jewish life he had known back in Galicia, and also about his discomfort of not “fitting in” in America.

The Rebbe responded to each letter, offering support and

encouraging the Chasid to remain strong. One day the Rebbe received a letter where the Chasid wrote that things were beginning to get a bit easier. He had picked up a little English and he was making friends. The loneliness he had complained about was not as strong anymore. Life in America was becoming more bearable.

Immediately, the Rebbe sent a letter back to the Chasid instructing him to return to Galicia. The Chasid obeyed without hesitation, and he came to see the Rebbe as soon as he returned. He asked the Rebbe why he had encouraged him to stay in America when things were so hard for him, and yet, he insisted that he come home just when he was beginning to grow accustomed to life over there.

The Rebbe replied, “A Yid in Galus must always feel like a newcomer. As long as you felt out of place in America, I knew your spiritual level was safe. The moment you began settling in and feeling comfortable there, I sensed a threat to the safety of your Ruchniyus, and I instructed you to come home immediately!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeishev 5786 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefillah.