

# SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS TERUMAH 5786

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## Getting Approval from A Higher Authority



There was a young man who was in his early forties who became very ill, R”L. He had a wife and children, and his condition was critical. The doctor told his worried wife, “I’m sorry, I can’t risk operating on him unless you get approval from a higher authority. I am afraid that he may not survive the procedure.”

The doctor expected her to consult a more experienced physician, but she had a different idea. She recalled that her husband had learned by Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt”l, in his youth, and she decided to seek his guidance.

When the doctor later asked if she had consulted a higher authority, she replied, “Yes, and I’m going to see him tomorrow.” He asked, “Which doctor are you going to see?”

She explained, “He’s not a doctor. He’s a Rabbi.” Shocked, the doctor said,

“A Rabbi? How can he decide on a medical matter?” With confidence, she responded, “You asked for the highest authority. To me, this is it.”

Intrigued, the doctor asked to join her. The next day, they visited Rav Moshe, who listened carefully to the details of the illness and the operation. When

the wife showed him a photo of her husband from his Yeshivah days, Rav Moshe recognized him and began to cry. Moved by the Rabbi's genuine compassion, the doctor turned to the wife and said, "Now I understand. Someone who cares so deeply will be guided to the right decision."

Rav Moshe advised that the operation should proceed, but he added that the man should commit to saying every Brachah out loud so others around him could answer Amein. He explained that the Gematria of the word 'Amein' is 91, which is the same Gematria as the word 'Malach'.

Rav Moshe said that every Brachah that is answered with an Amein creates a Malach, and these Malachim provide protection. Baruch Hashem the operation succeeded, and the man fully recovered. He also fulfilled his commitment to always say Brachos out loud, and he would always encourage others to do the same!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Beshalach 5786 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

# The Hishtadlus Of Rav Sonnenfeld

By Yoni Schwartz

Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, ZT"l, was known as an incredible *ba'al bitachon* (someone who trusts in G-d). He would spend each day learning Torah every second he could. Unfortunately, the economic situation of pre-state Israel was awful, and he lived in dire poverty. His wife was a complete *tzadekes* (righteous woman), and day after day she did everything to make it possible for him not have to interrupt his Torah learning for even one second.



One time, however, it got to the point where they had no bread to feed the kids, so she decided to speak with her husband. Understanding the situation, right after their conversation, Rav Sonnenfeld put on his coat and walked outside in search of livelihood. A curious Jew who knew what a tremendous ba'al bitachon and *tzaddik* Rav Sonnenfeld was, overheard that he was about to start looking for parnassah. Unable to restrain his curiosity, he decided to follow from a distance to see what the Rav would do.

A few minutes later, the Rav bent down to pick something up from the middle of the street. Bursting from curiosity, the yid repositioned himself to get a better view and he saw that the Rav had just picked up two gold Napoleon coins. This Jew thought, "We each must do our *hishtadlus* (effort), but the more we trust in Hashem, the less hishtadlus we have to put in. The Rav's level of *bitachon* (trust in G-d) must be extraordinary!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Beshalach 5786 email of Torah Sweets.

## The Rosh Yeshiva And the Chess Master



At the Shivah for Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l, the Rosh Yeshivah of Aish HaTorah, Rav Noach's daughter told over a story. Decades earlier, a certain man visited the Yeshivah for two months to learn Torah. As he was preparing to go back

to America, Rav Noach approached him, and asked why he was in such a rush to return home.

The young man was reluctant to answer, not looking to give an honest reply. Finally, after enough prodding, the man shared that he was a chess champion and he had a tournament to return to.

Rav Noach thought for a moment, and then he proposed a deal. He said, “Play one game of chess with me. If you win, I will not bother you anymore about going home. But if I win, you stay in Yeshivah.” He agreed.

After about an hour of intense playing, Rav Noach made an unexpected move and cornered him. It was a checkmate! The man was shocked. He could not believe he had lost! He was a national chess champion, and he just got defeated by a Rabbi.

Nevertheless, “A deal is a deal,” he said, and he ended up remaining in Yeshivah for some time after that. He ended up being very successful, and he later became a Rosh Yeshivah in Eretz Yisroel.

After that chess game, when Rav Noach was asked if he used to be a chess champion himself, he replied, “No. I have not played chess since I was eleven years old.”

He was then asked how he could have had the audacity to propose such a deal to the man, and he explained, “I knew that if I lost the game, this man’s connection to Hashem, and all of his future descendants’ connections to Yiddishkeit might also be lost. I also knew that Hashem wanted him to stay. I made the offer to play, and I simply trusted that Hashem would make me win!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Beshalach 5786 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.

## Mesiras Nefesh in Dachau

While he was in Dachau, a Jew who was being taken to his death suddenly flung a small bag at Judah Wallis. He caught it, thinking it might contain a piece of bread. Upon opening it, however, he was disturbed to discover a pair of tefillin. Judah was very frightened because he knew that were he to be caught carrying tefillin, he would be put to death instantly. So, he hid the tefillin under his shirt and in the morning, just before the appel [roll call], while still in his bunkhouse, he put

on the tefillin. Unexpectedly, a German officer appeared. He ordered him to remove the tefillin and noted the number on Judah's arm.

At the appel, in front of thousands of silent Jews, the officer called out Judah's number and he had no choice but to step forward. The German officer waved the tefillin in the air and said, "Dog! I sentence you to death by public hanging for wearing these." Judah was placed on a stool and a noose was placed around his neck. Before he was hanged, the officer said in a mocking tone, "Dog, what is your last wish?" Judah replied instantly: "To wear my tefillin one last time."

The officer was dumfounded. He handed Judah the tefillin. As Judah put them on, he recited the verses that are said while the tefillin are being wound around the fingers: "וארשתיך לי לעולם: וארשתיך לי בצדק ובמשפט ובחסד וברחמים: וארשתיך ה' - I will betroth you to me forever and I will betroth you to me with righteousness and with justice and with kindness and with mercy and I will betroth you to me with fidelity, and you shall know G-d."

The entire camp was forced to watch this Jew, with a noose around his neck wearing tefillin on his head and arm, as they awaited his impending hanging. Even women from the adjoining camp were lined up at the barbed wire fence that separated them from the men's camp, forced to watch this horrible sight. Judah turned to look at the silent crowd. He saw tears in many people's eyes. Even at that moment, as he was about to be hanged, he was shocked. Jews were crying! How was it possible that they still had tears left to shed? And for a stranger? Where were those tears coming from? Impulsively, in Yiddish, he called out, "Yidden, do not cry. I am the victor. Don't you understand, I am the winner!"

The German officer understood the Yiddish and was infuriated. He grabbed the noose off of Judah's neck and screamed, "You dog, you think you are the winner? Hanging is too good for you. You are going to get another kind of death."

Judah was taken from the stool and forced into a squatting position. Two huge rocks were placed under his arms. Then he was told that he would be receiving 25 lashes to his head - the head on which he had dared to position his tefillin. The officer told him that if he dropped even one rock, he would be shot immediately. The officer laughed and advised him, "Do yourself a favor. Drop the rocks now. You will never survive 25 lashes to the head. Nobody ever does."

Somewhere close to the 25th lash, Judah lost consciousness and was left for dead. The crowd of Yidden were ordered to move on and his body was dragged over to a pile of corpses, after which he would have been burned in a ditch. Suddenly, another Jew saw him, shoved him to the side, and covered his head with a rag so people didn't realize he was still breathing. Eventually, after he recovered consciousness fully, he crawled to the nearest bunkhouse that was on raised piles

and hid under it until he was strong enough to come out under his own power. Two months later he was liberated.

During the hanging and beating episode, a 17-year-old girl had been watching the events from the women's side of the fence. She cried like everyone else, and was amazed at the strength of character of a man slated for death, who refused to give in. After liberation, she found her way to Judah. She walked over to him and said, "I've lost everyone and everything. I don't want to be alone any more. I saw what you did that day when the officer wanted to hang you. Will you marry me?"

Judah agreed and they went to the Klausenberger Rebbe zt"l and requested that he perform the marriage ceremony. The Rebbe, whose Kiddush Hashem is legendary, wrote out a kesubah [which the family still has today] by hand from memory and married the couple. They ultimately made Aliya and rebuilt their lives in the Holy Land. (Excerpted from the Aish.com website.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bo 5786 edition of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman's Torah Tavlin.*

# An Investment For a Tremendous Return

**By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon**

As everyone knows, one of the ways of acquiring something is by making a trade, I will give you one of my belongings and in turn you will give me one of yours. The more valuable the item that you desire is, the more you will give up.

In my youth I heard or read the following story. After the *histalkus* of a certain tzaddik, his children sat down to divide his personal items. Before they began they all agreed that it must be done in the spirit of their father, without any friction or hard feelings. For example, they put all of his seforim in a manner that they could all be seen and they all received an equal amount, allowing everyone to state their preferences etc.

After that they divided a second category, let us say his personal items, such as his kiddish bechers (cups) the seder plate, menorah etc.

The final item that had to be received was his tefillin, but how could that be divided, and especially as everyone truly desired to obtain it?

After much thought they decided that each one would write what they are willing to give up to obtain it. One son wrote, "I will give up ta certain item from

each category we divided”. Another wrote, “I am willing to allow you to choose any item from each category”, and so on. Finally, they opened the last note, in which it was written, I will give away everything I received for the tefillin.

All of the sons saw that he treasured it more than they did and said unanimously that he deserves to receive it.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Beshalach 5786 email of Rabbi Avtzon's Weekly Story.*

# **The Blessing of the Vishnitza Rebbe**

**By Yehuda Z. Klitnick**

Harav Hatzaddik Reb Aryeh Leib Lipshutz (1727-1846), the Rav of Vishnitza, Ukraine, was the son-in-law of the heilige Yismach Moshe. He is the author of the AryehD'Bei Elayi. He had a chosid, R' Hershel, who had an iron business with a partner. This went on for many years. However, the business began to go sour suddenly, and there wasn't enough business to support both partners.

R' Hershel went to his Rebbe for advice on what to do. The Rebbe read his Kvitel and said he should dissolve the partnership and go into the new business of lending money to the elite Dukes at high interest, and he would be successful.

You would go to the marketplace, where the Dukes frequented and they needed money to buy merchandise, and you would supply the money to them. The Rebbe gave him a bracha and bid him farewell. R' Hershel was a Chosid and didn't question the Rebbe.

He straightened out with his partner for a small buyout, and R' Hershel made plans to go to the next big market day. He was puzzled; how can he lend money to the Dukes when he has no money of his own? With complete Emunah in his Rebbe, he didn't hesitate and went to the marketplace, pacing back and forth, following the Rebbe's advice.

The week passed by, and R' Hershel came home penniless! The next week he made his trip again and paced back and forth between the stands, hoping for a breakthrough, but again the week almost passed, and R' Hershel had no money to lend, and he figured he'd go home again penniless and try again next week. He thought to himself

that the Rebbe blessed him to be successful, and the problem may be that he didn't have strong enough Emunah. R' Hershel got his thoughts together and strengthened his Emunah in Tzaddik.

The market began to wind down, and the dealers began closing their stands when a heavy rain with gusty winds suddenly began, and R' Hershel had nowhere to go for shelter. He ran to an empty stand that had a small roof and stood there hoping the rain would subside soon and he would be able to travel home. The winds became stronger, and R' Hershel became soaked from the rain when suddenly he felt a thump on his feet. Startled! He inspected the item, and to his dismay, it was a pouch filled with money!

R' Hershel began to count the money, and there were 900 Reinish in clean bills, a rather large sum of money. R' Hershel was an honest person and decided to wait until the owner of the pouch would come looking for it and make a Kiddush Hashem by returning it to the rightful owner. He waited, and finally the rain stopped.

R' Hershel began to pace around hoping to find the owner of the pouch. He waited until the market was empty of people, and it was soon getting dark. When no one came forth to claim the pouch, R' Hershel understood that his Rebbe was behind this miracle and decided to pack up his wagon and go home.

As he was ready to leave, he heard a friend of his calling him to wait. He saw an acquaintance, a broker who he knew from the iron business. The broker was glad to see R' Hershel and said he had a deal for him that would make him a tremendous profit! He continued, "One of the Dukes is desperate for money now, and has a tremendous wine cellar, which he is willing to sell." "If you have 900 Reinish, I will give you the opportunity to make the deal, as I know you. If not, I'll find someone else."

R' Hershel was excited about how the Rebbe's bracha was unfolding in front of his eyes! R' Hershel answered to the broker, "Yes, I have 900 Reinish and am willing to make the deal." The broker was happy that he found a suitor and said, "The Duke needs 800 Reinish for the wine, and 100 is my broker's fee. The great news is that I have a customer ready to buy the wine cellar for 9000 Reinish!"

R' Hershel and the broker went to the Duke's home to announce that they had a deal. A contract was written up for the sale, and the broker paid the Duke his 800 Reinish.

Meanwhile, the broker told R' Hershel to stay overnight in a hotel, and in the morning we will go to my buyer, who will pick up the wine and pay you the 9000 Reinish.

R' Hershel thanked his friend for his thoughtfulness. The next day the deal was consummated, and R' Hershel traveled home a happy person.

The next day he went to visit his Rebbe and shared the exciting news. He also gave the Rebbe a nice gift. R' Hershel asked the Rebbe what he should do further. The Rebbe answered, "The next month stay home and sit and learn in Shul and serve Hashem. Afterwards, you can go again to the marketplace, now that you have enough money to lend, and Hashem will give you success. When you are home, sit and learn as much as you can. R' Hershel was zoche to Torah and wealth together.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Beshalach 5786 edition of Pardes Yehuda.*

# A Minyan for Mincha

**By Rabbi Nachman Seltzer**



**Rabbi Aharon Pessin**

I have a close friend, Rav Aharon Pessin, who travels frequently to America, and when he is there, he davens in one of two nearby cities.

He told me something fascinating.

In one of the cities, every time he arrives, there is always a minyan. Without fail. Morning, afternoon, evening, there is a minyan.

In the other city, he says, it is almost impossible. He would come to shul and simply wait. No minyan. Agan, and again. He found it baffling. How could it be that in a Jewish community, there is consistently no minyan?

One day, as he sat waiting in shul, he overheard two men talking. One said to the other, “Did you try the new kosher restaurant in town?”

“Yes,” the other replied. “It was excellent.”

Rav Aharon thought to himself: Wait a second. You have enough Jews to sustain a kosher restaurant, but not enough to form a minyan for Mincha?

So, he went over to the gabbai and asked him directly. “How is it possible that there are enough people to support a kosher restaurant, but not enough people to make a minyan?”

The gabbai answered, “Let me add to your question. We don’t have one kosher restaurant. We have two.”

“Then what is going on here?” Rav Aharon said.

The gabbai said, “It all goes back to a curse of a rav.”

Many decades earlier, over a hundred years ago, there was a rabbi in that city, one of the early rabbis in America. He was a true European-style rav, uncompromising in halachah. He founded one of the first yeshivos in the country and insisted on proper standards of kashrus. The butchers of the city despised him. He demanded real supervision, real integrity, and they did not appreciate it. Eventually, they decided to take revenge.

On Purim, they sent a beautifully wrapped mishloach manos to the rabbi’s home. The rebbetzin opened the package, unaware that inside were starving, crazed rats that had been trapped together. They began attacking each other. The shock was unbearable. She suffered a complete breakdown and had to be hospitalized.

When the rav saw what had been done to his wife, broken and devastated, he cried out in anguish: “I curse this city. It will never be a makom Torah.”

And according to the gabbai, that curse came true.

People tried to start yeshivos, but nothing lasted. People tried to build Torah institutions, but no success. Even a minyan could not reliably exist.

Rav Aharon asked the gabbai, “Did anyone ever go to the rav’s grave to ask mechilah?”

“We tried,” the gabbai said. “Every time we attempted to organize a group, something stopped us. Once, we planned a trip, and the biggest storm in twenty years hit the East Coast. You can look it up. Everything fell apart.”

“I’m in America for a few more days,” Rav Aharon told him “Here’s my number. If you manage to gather a minyan to go, call me. I want to join.”

The call never came.

Rav Aharon returned to Eretz Yisrael and raised the question to Rav Elyashiv zt”l. Does the city have an obligation to ask forgiveness, given that it was their grandparents who committed the offense?

Rav Elyashivz wrote back a responsum. He ruled that technically there was no absolute halachic obligation because these were not the same individuals. However, there had been a profound disgrace to a Torah scholar. And therefore, the right and proper thing to do was for the community to go to the cemetery and ask mechilah.

The psak was sent to the gabbai.

This time, not just a minyan, but a large group went together. They traveled to the cemetery, recited Tehillim, davened, and asked forgiveness from the rav. Rav Aharon later returned to the city after a few weeks had passed. He walked into shul, and there was a minyan. Not barely. Comfortably. The curse had been broken.

In a moment of pain, in a moment of anguish, a rav uttered a single sentence. One sentence. And its impact lasted over a hundred years.

Words are not light. Words carry power. We sometimes say, “That was long ago,” or, “That was generations back.” But this wasn’t 2,000 years ago. This was a century ago. And the power remained, until it was addressed.

Before we speak, it takes only a moment to pause and ask: “Should I say this? Should I not?”

“Maves v’chayim b’yad halashon—Death and life are in the hands of the tongue” (Mishlei 18:21).

Words build worlds. And words can destroy them.

We must choose them with care.

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# Cornered at the Fish Grill

By Rabbi Yoel Gold



I was once having lunch at the Fish Grill, sitting at that corner table by the bench in the back. I was in the middle of my salmon filet, coleslaw, rice, fully settled, when suddenly, a man walks in, followed by his entire family. He looks at me and says, “Rabbi Gold?”

“Yes,” I respond.

“I’d like this table.” I said, half-smiling, “That’s nice—I’d also like this table.” But there was urgency in his voice. Something about the tone made me pause. I looked at him, then at his family behind him, thinking perhaps someone needed to sit urgently.

Again, he said, “I really need this table.”

Fork in hand, mid-bite, I hesitated for a moment, but then I said, “Okay,” and I slid down the bench to another seat.

He sat down, but not where I expected. He positioned himself facing the corner, directly toward the wall. No view or eye contact. Just the wall.



**Rabbi Yoel Gold**

I continued eating, but my mind was racing. “What just happened?” I had mixed emotions. Curiosity, confusion, a bit of irritation. The whole thing felt strange.

And then I saw it. He opened his backpack and carefully took out an oxygen apparatus. He plugged it in and began taking measured breaths. In that instant, everything shifted. Immediately, I felt a wave of regret and compassion. He needed that table—not for comfort, not for preference—but for dignity. He wanted privacy. He didn’t want people staring.

After a minute or two, once he caught his breath, he turned toward me and said quietly,

“Thank you so much. I’m sorry if I came across aggressive.”

My heart melted. In a single moment, judgment turned into understanding and suspicion into empathy. A story I had written in my head was completely rewritten by reality. That is *dan l’kaf zechus*, giving the benefit of the doubt. It took all of two minutes.

We never know what another person is carrying. What looks like rudeness may be desperation. What feels like entitlement may be vulnerability. Sometimes, all it takes is a pause, and a little humility, to realize how wrong our first assumptions can be.

And just like that, the judgment dissolves.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Beshalach 5786 edition of TorahAnyTimes as compiled and edited by Elan Perchik.*

## Please Turn Off Your Cell Phone!



### **The Bobover Rebbe, zt”l**

One Rosh Chodesh a man came to daven by the Bobover Rebbe (Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam). It was at the beginning of the cellular phone era. The phone rang.

The Rebbe called him over and asked him to turn off the cell till after Mussaf. After the man finished davening he turned the phone back on.

The cell rang. His secretary was on the line. “You had a miracle,” she said. “We tried calling you about an hour ago to quickly buy some stocks that were a bargain. But we couldn’t reach you so you lost the deal. But then half an hour later the stocks crashed. It was a miracle you never bought them.”

*Reprinted from the Beshalach 5786 edition of Inspired by a Story by Rabbi Dovid Caro.*