

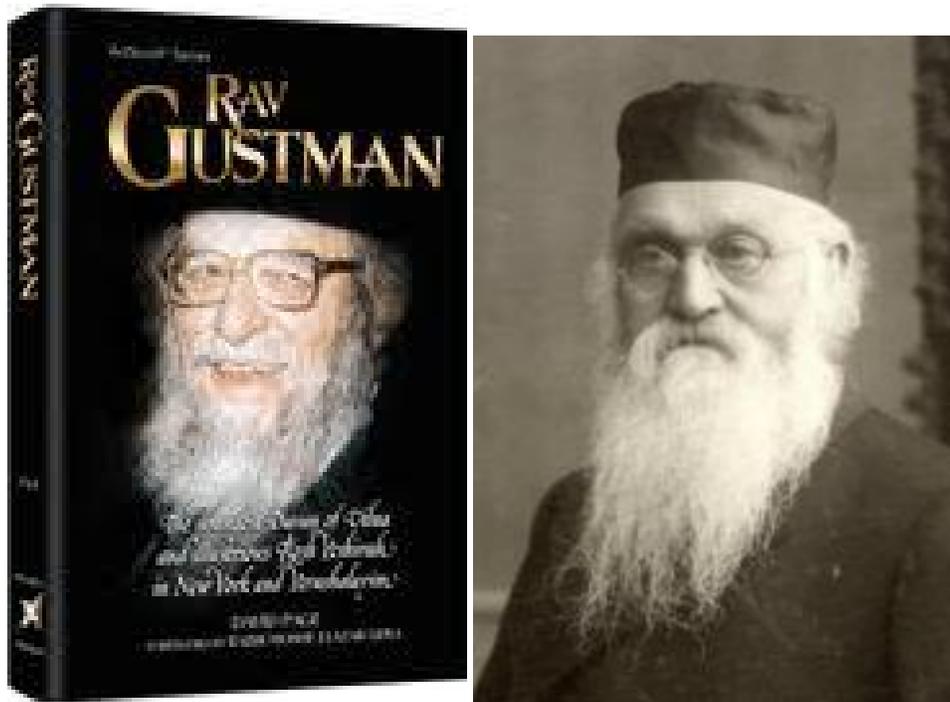
SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS VAYISHLACH 5783

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It's Never Too Late!



Rav Yisroel Gustman and his teacher Rav Shimon Shkop of blessed memories

Following the wedding of his granddaughter, Horav Yisrael Gustman, zt"l, began to wear a gartel, silk wrapped-around belt designated to be worn during davening. A chassidic man, to whom the gartel was part and parcel of his davening preparationsn asked, "Why does the great gaon wear a gartel?" (He was probably alluding to the fact that a gartel was not part of the davening dress code in the Lithuanian yeshivos.)

Rav Gustman replied, "My Rebbe, Horav Shimon Shkop, zT"l (Grodno), began putting on Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin one day after davening. When one of his

students questioned this practice, Rav Shimon said, “I have constantly spent time and exertion in an attempt to explain the expositions of Rabbeinu Tam. Can you imagine that when I will go up to Heaven and be greeted by Rabbeinu Tam, I do not want him to rebuke me for being a karkafta d’lo monach Tefillin, a man who did not wear Tefillin (since, according to Rabbeinu Tam, the sequence of the placement of the parshiyos, differs from that of Rashi).”

Likewise, when Rav Shimon reached a certain age, he began to wear a gartel. When he was queried for a reason for this practice, he said, “That he wanted to prepare for the davening.” (Hikon l’kraas Hashem Elokecha, “Prepare to meet your G-d.” One should perform a preparatory act prior to davening. The gartel, belt, is used by many as a garment set aside for prayer.) “Like my revered Rebbe, I have reached an age at which I would like to accept a new mitzvah (manner of serving Hashem) upon myself.

Reprinted from the Parshas Toldos 5783 edition of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum’s Peninim on the Torah

The Legacy of a Breslover Chossid in the Lodz Ghetto

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser



View of the Lodz Ghetto residents crossing a pedestrian bridge (courtesy of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum)

In the ghetto of Lodz during the Second World War, R' Simcha Borenstein – a Breslover *chossid* – was very active in the Lodz ghetto, giving Torah classes, organizing *tefillah b'tzibbur*, and hosting *Seudos Shabbos* with *zemiros*. He was literally a wellspring of hope, spreading light in the darkness of despair.

Continue to Carrying the Torch of Torah

He was especially devoted to inspiring the younger generation, trying to ignite within them a strong love for Torah and *mitzvos*, to ensure that they would continue to carry the torch of Torah. Even at a time when the Nazis had forbidden all such activity, R' Simcha continued.

At that time, when even suspicion of the slightest crime could result in certain death, someone accused R' Simcha of theft. R' Simcha could only raise his eyes and heart to Hashem and plead for salvation. Unbelievably, the accuser was found to be the real thief. R' Simcha was set free, and resumed his holy work. His *mesiras nefesh* not to give up was an inspiration to everyone.

Looking for Some Memento of Her Brother

R' Simcha, unfortunately, did not survive the war. When the war was over, though, his sister who had miraculously survived, came to the ghetto looking for some memento of her brother. As she searched among the ruins, she was shocked to recognize her brother's handwriting on a bundle of letters that she discovered. The writings contained words of *emunah* and *bitachon* that he had penned to his brother.

One letter that was particularly poignant read: *Today is Lag B'Omer, and here in the ghetto it was an exceptionally difficult day of gloom and despair. In honor of the great day, though, I was able to learn a small piece of the Zohar I had obtained. As I studied it, I fell into a deep sleep, and the great Tanna R' Shimon Bar Yochai and other great people, including R' Nachman of Breslov, appeared in my dream.*

I remember shouting, "Rebbe, you have forgotten us! The Jews are suffering greatly!" R' Nachman heard me, and he lifted me up and danced with me, as everyone joined in.

When I awoke I searched for a small sefer of R' Nachman that I had in my possession and I came across his teaching that said, "Through dancing we sweeten the judgment of the Jewish nation."

Reprinted from the November 24, 2022 website of The Jewish Press.

A Guiding Light

By Nachman Schachter

Alex Szendro was born in Sarbogard, Hungary, in 1905. He grew up as a secular Jew. When World War II broke out, he was fortunate to have a very close friend who worked in the government office of birth records. This non-Jew did Alex an incredible favor: He destroyed Alex's birth records, and therefore there was no record of his status as a Jew.

In fact, as a result, as far as the Hungarian authorities were concerned, Alex Szendro did not exist. Even though he had no papers identifying him as a citizen, he managed to rent a small room. Alex was careful to stay under the radar of the authorities so as not to be noticed. He was somehow able to remain undetected by police until 1944, when he was almost forty years old.

As the war was nearing its end, Alex was picked up by the police and sent to a work camp. Alex felt very fortunate when he learned that his work responsibilities included helping in the kitchen. That meant that he had easier access to food than others.

From Alex's vantage point, he discerned the unspoken basic camp survival system. When one needed anything, he should acquire it by any means at his disposal. If that entailed lying or stealing, that was fine. Survival of the fittest was the rule.

Alex noticed that all the inmates of the camp acted this way, except for one small group of people. This group was dramatically different from the others. When one of them needed food, the group made sure that he received it. If someone needed medical care, the others made sure he got it. Members of the group looked out for one another.

After weeks of admiring them from afar, Alex identified this group as Orthodox Jews. Seeing how wonderfully they looked after each other, as well as the beautiful camaraderie they shared, he desired such a relationship for himself and his future family.

He approached the group and expressed his genuine feelings about the life he wished to lead. They put him in touch with Rabbi Benedikt, their rabbi. The rabbi became Alex's mentor and taught him all about Orthodox Jewish life. Soon after the war ended, Alex, who was the only surviving member of the Szendro family, moved to Budapest, close to the home of Rabbi Benedikt.

He married and started a family. He did his best to acquire sefarim written in Hungarian, and went to classes given on Jewish topics, so that he and his family

could become productive and active Orthodox Jews. Alex established a photography business, and became successful and financially comfortable.

In Budapest, though, there were very few opportunities for his children to receive a Jewish education or for his family to practice their religion properly. Alex realized that it was time for his family to leave Hungary. Only one barrier stood before him: a rule to discourage immigration. An emigrant from Hungary was permitted to take with him only \$50 per person. Any remaining funds had to be left behind.

Even so, Alex made the decision to leave. In March of 1957, Alex, now Shimshon, his wife Magda, and his children Yosef and Miriam, landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Halifax was a hub for immigrants, the Ellis Island of Canada. Within a few days, they joined the Orthodox community of Toronto, Ontario — proud and thankful to Hashem that they were going to be living a wonderful new Orthodox Jewish life in a religiously hospitable community.

- Heard from Yosef Szendro, Providence, Rhode Island.

Reprinted from the Parshas Toldos 5783 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “Ten Steps to Eternity.”

Fulfilling the Will of Those Who Fear Him



In the last winter of his life, R' Shimon Schwab called in a wealthy benefactor of his kehillah. “I don't

have much time left in this world,” said R' Schwab to the benefactor, “and I will be going to Gehinnom.

“The Yeshivah's [Yeshiva Rav Samson Rafael Hirsh] deficit is close to a million dollars and most of it is in the unpaid salaries of its melamdin. I am Rav of the kehillah that teaches Torah im Derech Eretz.

“Where is the derech eretz if we haven't paid our teachers for months? It will not be long before I will be called to give a din ve'cheshbon for my actions and I will be going to Gehinnom for this.

“I’m begging you. Please take me out of Gehinnom!”

The man was shaken. After giving the matter some thought, he agreed to cover the entire deficit in teachers’ salaries, in weekly installments, to be completed before the Yeshivah’s annual dinner.

The last payment was made on the Friday before the dinner. The Yeshivah’s dinner was on Sunday night. The following evening, R’ Schwab passed away. (Torah Lives)

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeitzei 5783 email of The Weekly Vort.

Quick to the Punch

Little Yonatan was strolling down the deserted cobblestone street in the village of Pintshov, when a bully approached him and began to beat him mercilessly. The beating went on for a few minutes. The child began to wail loudly, and the ruffian, fearful of discovery, started to walk away.

Yonatan ran after him, stuck his hand in his pocket, and thrust a few coins into his attacker’s hand. “Here, this is for you. Take my money, and I’ll have a misvah.”

The ruffian looked at the boy. Nobody had ever paid him for a beating before! “What’s this, Jew? Why are you paying me?”

The Big Misvah of the 14th Day of Kislev

“Don’t you know anything about Jewish holidays? Today is the fourteenth day of Kislev. If a person attacks a Jew today, it is a big misvah to give him all the money he owns. It is absolutely forbidden to retaliate. It’s just a shame you happened to find me. All I have is those few coins I gave you.”

The bully pocketed the coin and smiled. What a fantastic misvah! This was his great day, for sure. He walked purposefully to the main street, searching to an appropriate target. He scrutinized the bustling crowd going about their business until his eyes fell on the rosh hakahal, Reb Zundel. With that elegant fur collar and fancy silver tipped cane, he was sure to have loads of money with him. He ran to Reb Zundel, threw him to the ground, and punched him in the face. Then, he stuck his hand out in a gesture suggesting payment.

In seconds the crowd was upon him. Throngs of men ran to the rosh hakahal’s aid. They bound his attacker and called the police, not before administering a bit of

justice on their own. At the police station, the bully defended his action. He argued that a little boy had told him it was a misvah to hit Jews today.

The police took a description of the child, and someone in the crowd said that could be none other than little Yonatan. A group of men was dispatched to Yonatan's home. The child was playing outside.

"How could you tell somebody that it is a misvah to beat Jews today?" they asked.

"The scoundrel found me on a deserted street, and beat me black and blue," the child explained, displaying his bruised arm. "I knew I'd never be able to take revenge. Now, however, that I convinced him that it is worthwhile to beat wealthy Jews, he will be properly punished for striking me too. And please," he continued, "can I get my money back?"

The chief of police and all the assembled were astounded by the child's sharp wisdom. Little Yonatan grew up to be the famed Reb Yonatan Eibishitz, who continued to use his great wisdom for the benefit of his congregation and all of Klal Yisrael. (Brilliant Gems)

Reprinted from the Parshat Toldot 5783 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

The Advice of the Steipler Gaon

By Rabbi Mordechai Levin

Around fifty years ago, in Bnei Brak, there was a young lady who was mentioned to a fine, budding Talmid Chacham as a possible shidduch (marriage match). Both sides were extremely interested. However, as is customary, the parents of the learning boy asked for a handsome sum as a dowry. They wished for their son to be able to continue learning undisturbed, and not need to worry about supporting his young family. The father of the young lady appreciated the request and even had the means to provide such a large sum. However, he had planned to divide the sum amongst all his daughters, not give it all to this one daughter. As he was therefore about to say no to the suggested shidduch, his friend suggested that he go discuss the question with Reb Yisroel Yaakov Kanievsky, the Steipler Gaon, ZT"L.

The Steipler immediately answered that he should agree to the shidduch, and commit to the entire requested amount. The father attempted to explain that he had other daughters that he was also concerned about etc.



The Steipler Gaon

The Steipler cut him off, saying once again that he should do the shidduch, and bid him adieu. The father got the message and faithfully followed the advice of the Gaon. A short while later, the young couple happily announced their engagement. The father kept his word. He had money invested by a well-known, trusted individual by whom many people in the area invested their savings.

He went to him and requested a withdrawal of his entire investment, explaining that he needed it for a shidduch for his daughter. A short while later, due to a sudden downturn in the market, this investor's private fund took a huge hit. Unfortunately, many good people lost their entire life's savings.

The grateful father told everyone that because he listened to the Steipler, even though it was hard for him, he now had his money and a beautiful shidduch. If he had not followed Hashgacha, and had not listened to the Gadol who enjoyed a special Hashgacha from Hashem, he would have neither his money nor the shidduch!

Reprinted from the Parshas Toldos 5783 email of Torah Sweets

The Baba Sali's Prediction



The Baba Sali and Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu of blessed memories

The wife of Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, zt"l, Rabbanit Tzviyah, once related that when her husband was a Dayan in Yerushalayim, someone from southern Israel came to visit their home. As the man was preparing to leave, Rav Eliyahu thought of joining him in his car to go visit the Baba Sali.

He asked his wife if she would like to make the trip together with him, and suggested that they could return later by bus. She checked the bus schedule and saw that it would work if they could be in Ramle on time to catch the eleven o'clock bus back to Yerushalayim. However, catching that bus in Ramle meant that they would have to leave Netivot on an eight o'clock bus that night.

The Baba Sali's Wife Apologizes for Not Inviting Them into See Her Husband

They decided to make the trip, and took a ride with their visitor. When they arrived at the Baba Sali's home, the Baba Sali's wife greeted them at the door, and apologized, but she said she couldn't invite them in to see her husband. Rabbanit Tzviyah was very disappointed that they had made the trip for nothing.

But quickly, her distress ended. The Baba Sali called to his wife, and asked her to let them enter. He said, "I've been waiting for Rav Mordechai for days already!"

The Baba Sali's wife opened the door, and allowed them to come in. Rav Eliyahu went into the Baba Sali's study and Rabbanit Tzviyah sat down with the Baba Sali's wife, who began to cry. She said, "My husband hasn't eaten this entire week, not since the end of Shabbos. He said there is a terrible, heavy decree hanging over the Jewish people, and he's been fasting to try and annul it. Please ask your husband to persuade him to eat. He hasn't eaten for five days already!"

"The Decree Has Been Canceled!"

After some time had passed, the door to the Baba Sali's study opened, and the two Rav's came out. The Baba Sali's face was shining, and he said to his wife, "The decree has been canceled! Let's eat with our guests!" His wife immediately set the table and served a beautiful meal. The two Rabbis sang and praised Hashem, and at seven-thirty, Rabbanit Tzviyah began to signal to her husband to finish and say Birkas HaMazon, because they needed to leave in time to catch the eight o'clock bus out of Netivot.

Although the Baba Sali was sitting further away from Rabbanit Tzviyah, he seemed to know what she was saying. He instructed Rav Eliyahu, "Tell your wife not to worry. You'll get back to Yerushalayim in good time." He continued the meal for another hour, singing and praising Hashem. Then, they finally Bentched and finished the meal. It was eight-thirty at night, long after the bus to Ramle had come and gone.

When they left the Baba Sali's house, Rav Eliyahu said to his wife, "Come, we'll take the late bus to Ramle and see what we can do from there." She told him, "The bus that leaves now doesn't get to Ramle until eleven-thirty, which is half an hour after the last bus from Ramle departs for Yerushalayim."

Rav Eliyahu's Refuses to Be Worried

Rav Eliyahu replied, "Don't worry about that. At least we'll be closer to Yerushalayim." They took the eight-thirty bus to Ramle, and arrived there at eleven-thirty. Rav Eliyahu then suggested, "Let's see what's happening with the bus to Yerushalayim."

His wife responded, "It was supposed to leave at eleven. I don't think we should bother." But Rav Eliyahu was insistent. They went to the bus stop and saw, incredibly, the bus to Yerushalayim was still sitting there, full of passengers!

Rav Eliyahu asked the driver, "Can we board?"

The driver answered, "There's no point. The bus won't start."

Rav Eliyahu then asked, "Then why are all the passengers still here?"

The driver responded, "They have already paid, so they're waiting it out. But for you, there's no point in boarding. The bus has broken down." Rav Eliyahu said, "We're getting on anyway," and he got on the bus together with his wife.

They settled into their seats and then Rav Eliyahu said to the driver, “Try starting the engine again.” The driver turned his key in the ignition, and to everyone’s amazement, the bus started very smoothly, even though it hadn’t worked for the past half hour! In shock, the driver exclaimed, “Are you Eliyahu HaNavi?”

“No.” Rav Eliyahu said. “I’m Eliyahu Mordechai!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Toldos 5782 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’ Torah U’Tefilah.

The Illiterate Millionaire

By Rabbi Yehoshua Zitron

Following the Second World War, one man moved from Europe to America and attempted to gain a job to support his family. He didn’t speak a word of English, so it was a significant challenge. However, that didn’t stop him from searching for a job within the Jewish community, where the language barrier wouldn’t be a hindrance to hiring him. But that was to no avail either. At that point, he figured to himself that he’ll be the attendee in one of the local shuls who would put all its different affairs in order and see through all that is needed to keep it clean and organized.

“Do You Speak English?”

After approaching one of the directing members of the local shul, it looked promising that he would be able to earn the job. “Just tell me,” asked the board member before leaving, “do you speak English?” “I don’t,” the fellow responded. “Do I need to know English for this job? I’m just organizing and cleaning the shul.” But the main members of the shul did not like that answer. The man, though, couldn’t understand the concern. Why did he need to know English in order to put books away, sweep floors and organize and arrange the shul’s seating? “If people will come inside and need to ask you something, we need you to be able to respond in English.” And with this, it was crystal clear. The fellow couldn’t even obtain a job within the Jewish community, being a janitor of all things in a shul.

At this point, he borrowed a small amount of money from his friend and purchased a pushcart and some items. His plan was to go door-to-door and attempt to sell whatever houseware items the local townspeople were interested in purchasing from his collection. And thus began his small, private business. He bought some houseware, loaded it into his pushcart and went from house to house and sold it at a price higher than he purchased himself. And quite to his surprise, he was successful. He sold his items one by one, little by little.

Eventually, his clientele base grew and he was able to buy two pushcarts and higher someone else to also go door-to-door and work under him.

From Pushcarts to Several Chains of Retail Stores

This eventually turned into five pushcarts, and from there, his business continued growing surprisingly until he decided to close the pushcart business and open a storefront which sold these same houseware items. He became very successful, and continued opening one retail store after another. Within a few years, he had several chains of stores.

One day, he was invited to partner with another large corporation and do business together with them. After reviewing all the details, he decided to go through with the joint venture. And there he sat along with the members of the other company in a luxurious skyscraper in Manhattan. After reviewing the documents, all that was left was to sign it and seal the merger.

The man began looking through all the paperwork and appending his signature where indicated. Yet, seeing this, the other partner stood up and waved him down. “Don’t just sign the paperwork. I want you to read everything and agree to it all.” The Jewish businessman let out a smile and let his future partner know that it was no problem, he was just going to sign it as he’d been doing. But the other partner was adamant. “I refuse to go into business until I know that you read it. I want everything to be straight, clear and on the table.” Finally, the Jewish businessman explained. “I would love to read this all...” “So go ahead,” said the other partner.

The Frum Man’s Confession

“Take all the time you need. “But that’s not the problem,” the frum man continued. “I don’t know how to read.”

The partner was stunned. “You don’t know how to read? You are a multi-millionaire, and have tons of employees working under you. What do you mean that you don’t know how to read?” “Exactly that,” he replied. And then the other partner continued. “Do you understand that you have made so much money, and if you knew how to read, you would have made even more?”

The Jewish businessman knew what to reply. “Do you know what would have happened if I knew how to read? Or even better, if I knew how to speak English properly? If I knew, I would be a janitor. Because I couldn’t get a job, years ago, even as a janitor, I am where I am today.”

In life, our biggest failure could be our biggest success, and our biggest downfall, our biggest windfall.

Reprinted from the Parshat Vayeira 5783 edition of theTorahanytimes.com Newsletter as compiled and edited by ElanPerchik.

A Time to be Recreated!

Rabbi David Ashear told a story about a man named Daniel who had excruciating back pain for 12 years. He went to doctors in Israel and America, ranging from specialists, holistic doctors and even surgeons. However, his pain would not let up. He couldn't sit in a chair, or learn with his son, he couldn't pay attention to his wife, or hold a job. He became very depressed.

Harav Menachem Stein saw how broken he was, and he gave him a few words of *chizuk*. He said, "Every year on *Rosh Hashanah*, Hashem creates a whole new world. Everything on earth is created a new, even people! There is even a halacha that says that if you didn't see someone in over a year, you would say a *beracha* with Hashem's name. The *beracha* of *Mechayeh hametim*.

Daniel said, "*Mechayeh Hametim?* But he didn't die!"

The Lesson of Sarah Imenu

Rabbi Stein continued, "The Chafetz Chaim said that when a person goes through *Rosh Hashanah*, he's given new life, it's as if he was brought back from the dead. We read about Sarah *Imenu* on *Rosh Hashanah* because Sarah literally did not even have a womb. When *Rosh Hashanah* came, she prayed with all she had, and Hashem created her anew. She had a baby at 90 years of age."

Daniel was so inspired, that when *Rosh Hashanah* came, he took upon himself to fast and did a *taanit dibbur*. He didn't eat or talk for 48 hours. He prayed with everything he had for Hashem to create him anew.

After *Yom Kippur* passed, Daniel was still in a tremendous amount of pain. He went to his back doctor to get a refill on his pain medication. His doctor had an emergency elsewhere, and a very young doctor, fresh out of medical school, saw Daniel that day. The doctor saw Daniel's history, and was very hesitant to give him a refill for his medicine.

Daniel said, "Please, I've been taking this for 12 years. I'm in excruciating pain, please just fill it so I can go home to lie down."

Doctor Suggests that Daniel Get His Kidney Checked

The doctor said, "Did you ever think about checking your kidneys? I'd like you to go get an ultrasound to check them. After that, I can refill your prescription."

Daniel knew they wouldn't find anything. He had been to over 20 doctors in 12 years, and this guy was a rookie. Plus, he didn't even have any kidney symptoms. Daniel had no interest. But the doctor was holding his prescription hostage, so he had to go.

When he got to the ultrasound, the technician found that his left kidney had a 20% blockage. Not enough for there to be kidney symptoms, but enough to cause severe pain when left untreated. Daniel couldn't believe it. It was an easy fix, and after a small procedure his back pain was gone!!

He thought back to Rabbi Stein's words, and realized that after his intense prayer, Hashem created him anew, and put the words into this young doctor's mouth to cure his supposedly incurable disease.

Reprinted from the Parashat Beresheet 5782 email of Jack E. Rahmey as based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amnon Sananes.

Italian Silver Tree-Form Hanukkah Lamp



This 1990 circa Hannukkah menorah was designed by the Milanese fine jewelry house of Buccellati and offered on the June 2022 Southeby's Judaica auction.