

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS SHELACH 5784

Volume 15, Issue 44 23 Sivan 5784/June 29, 2024

Printed L'illuy nishmas Nechama bas R' Noach, a"h

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Lots of Candies

By Aharon Spetner



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

The children in P.S. 147 all gathered in the auditorium as Joel E. Munz of Jolly Munz Candy Company emptied hundreds of boxes of delicious candy onto the tables.

“Okay, children, are you ready?” called Mr. Munz. “The candy eating contest will begin in 3... 2... 1... GO!”

The children hungrily attacked the packages of taffies, lollipops, chocolate bars, marshmallows, and more. Mr. Munz watched proudly as the kids stuffed as much candy

into their mouths as they could, while the contest judges carefully marked down the number of candies each student consumed.

“Five minutes left!” announced Mr. Munz.

The Children Were Eating the Candy at a Frantic Pace

The candy eating reached a frantic pace as the children seemed to be inhaling the candies in front of them. The cotton candy and caramel chews were a blur as they appeared to defy gravity with the pace at which they went from the table to the chomping mouths of the public school children.

“Time is up!” Mr. Munz declared. “Let’s see who won!”

The judges gathered to tabulate the results and a few minutes later a boy named Ralph Guzzles was named the winner.

“Congratulations, Ralph!” said Mr. Munz, putting his arm around the lanky seventh grader who seemed to appear a bit queasy.

Camera flashes went off as Mr. Munz presented Ralph with a giant gift certificate for a lifetime supply of candy (terms and conditions apply).

“Well, I have to be going now!” Mr. Munz announced. “I hope you all enjoyed yourselves!”

Mr. Munz left the school and drove off in his car, followed by a large Jolly Munz candy truck. He stopped a few blocks away outside Yeshiva Ketana Bnei Avigdor. It was recess time and the boys in the courtyard all stopped what they were doing and gaped at the massive Jolly Munz truck that had just parked outside of their cheider.

“Where Can I Find the Principal of Your School?”

“Hello,” Mr. Munz said to one of the boys. “Do you know where I can find the principal of your school?”

“The menahel?” asked Yitzy Greenbaum. “That’s him over there, walking out of the building right now.”

“Thank you,” smiled Mr. Munz as he approached the menahel, Rabbi Chaimovitz.

“Hello, Rabbi,” Mr. Munz began. “I am Joel E. Munz, the President of Jolly Munz Candy Company.”

“Please to meet you,” Rabbi Chaimovitz said, shaking Mr. Munz’s hand. “How can I help you?”

Several children started gathering around as Mr. Munz explained that Jolly Munz Candy Company was holding promotional candy-eating contests at various schools around the city.

“We would like to have our next contest right here in your school,” Mr. Munz said. “As you know, all of our candies are kosher and your students look like they would enjoy it. So, rabbi? What do you say?”

Rabbi Chaimovitz stroked his beard thoughtfully.

“Please rebbi???” pleaded one of the boys. “We promise we’ll learn extra hard!”

“Mr. Munz,” Rabbi Chaimovitz said. “I’m sure you know what type of school this is.”

“Of course I do,” Mr. Munz said. “You learn the Torah here. You know I had a bar mitzvah once and I read a few verses of Torah then. So, I know what it’s about.”

“That’s great to hear,” Rabbi Chaimovitz said. “But Torah isn’t like the subjects they teach at the public school down the road. It’s kadosh - holy. When we learn Torah, we are immersing ourselves in holiness.”

“But I Already Told You that the Candy is Kosher”

“But I already told you all of my candy is kosher,” said Mr. Munz, not understanding.

“It’s not about that,” said Rabbi Chaimovitz. “You know, this week in the synagogue we will read in the Torah about the nazir. Do you know what that is?”

“Oh, is that one of the impure animals?” asked Mr. Munz.

“No, no, a nazir is a man who takes upon himself not to drink wine or become impure. He is given the title ‘nazir’ because it means ‘crown’. Such a person who withholds some of the pleasures of life from himself is ‘crowned with holiness’.”

“I thought Jews are allowed to drink wine,” said Mr. Munz. “Don’t you use it for Friday night kiddush?”

**The Duty of a Jew is the Use the Pleasures
of This World to Serve Our Creator”**

“Indeed, we do,” answered Rabbi Chaimovitz. “And just like we drink wine in the service of Hashem, we are also allowed to enjoy your delicious candy here and there if it will help us to learn His holy Torah. The duty of a Jew is to use the pleasures of this world to serve our Creator.

“But to have a contest where children stuff their faces with as much candy as possible? Aside from taking time away from learning - and the fact that afterwards the children will be too sick to learn anything for three days - such overindulgence in physical pleasures is the opposite of the lesson of the nazir.”

“Ah, I understand,” said Mr. Munz. “Well in that case, can I give each of your students just one candy so they can have a sweet taste in their mouth when they return to class to learn more Torah?”

“Absolutely,” smiled the menahel. “Thank you so much for your generosity.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Reprinted from the Parshas Naso 5784 email of Toras Avigdor Junior, adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.

The Lesson of the Rebbe to a Future Texan



A guest came to spend a Shabbos in Texas. On Friday he asked if there was a Mikva so he could go Lekoved Shabbos. When he was there another man walked in he didn't look Jewish. He was wearing a large cowboy hat and a big necklace. The man thought to himself this must be a mistake.

He couldn't control himself. He turned to the man and asked him, "Who are you? What's your story?"

The Man with the Cowboy Hat Offered the Questionnaire a Ride

The man smiled and asked him to kindly wait till he finishes. When he was finished, the man with the cowboy hat offered the man a lift. "I am sure you want to know what someone like me is doing here. Let me tell you my story.

"I was born in a little village in Romania. As a boy of eight my father took me for Shabbos to the town Vishnitz to spend Shabbos with the Rebbe, the Ahavas Yisrael [Rabbi Yisroel Hager, 1860-1936]. It was the only time in my life I was by a Chassidic Rebbe. There was a very large turnout. Hundreds or maybe even thousands of Chassidim were there and my father was very worried for my safety.

"When the Rebbe came into the Shul for the Tisch – the Friday night dinner, my father told me to go under the tables. There I would have space and could go to sleep if I became tired. So, I slipped under the table. I wasn't the only one. There

were lots of children who were there just like me. It was very sweet. And the holy Rebbi was very special and kind and he made sure we all received Challa, fish and all the food he gave out at the Tisch. I felt like the Rebbe remembered I was there and he was making sure to look after me.”

“I Was Only Eight Years Old”

“The Rebbe started speaking Divrei Torah at the table. I never understood what he was saying. I was only eight years old and the Rebbe was busy saying over his deep thoughts. But suddenly he started speaking very slowly and emotionally and I understood every word. This is what he said.”

“Listen very carefully my dear brothers. I want to tell you something very important and I want you all to remember it forever. There are moments in life where a person feels drawn to holiness and Mitzvos, to become closer to Hashem. But then the Yetzer Hara comes along and whispers in his ear, ‘I know you. I know what you did yesterday, and I know what you are going to do in a couple of hours from now. Who are you trying to fool? Be honest with yourself and don’t try to be who you’re not.’”

“Leave Me Alone for five Minutes!”

“The Rebbi stood up and shouted from the depths of his heart, ‘listen to me dear Jews, don’t listen to him. Tell the voice: leave me alone for five minutes! Let me forget my past for a moment, I’m not interested now. For these five minutes I want to be holy and close to Hashem!’”

“The Rebbi sat down and suddenly I felt his hand on my head. He looked at me under the table. His eyes were red from crying. He said to me, ‘did you hear what I said, my dear child, please don’t ever forget.’

“Two years later my parents moved to America. I never had much of a Jewish education; I live in Texas but don’t lead a Jewish life. But every so often something wakes up inside me and I feel an urge to become closer, to become holy, to connect. And then I hear the other voice the Rebbi said, telling me I shouldn’t be stupid, be honest with yourself. And then I remember the words of the holy Rebbi and I pull myself together for those few minutes like today, do the Mitzva; forget about the past and forget about the future.”

Reprinted from the Parshat Bamidbar 5784 edition of the email – Inspired by a Story by Rabbi Dovid Caro.

The Night the Rebbe Disappeared

By Dr. Dovid Krinsky



From left to right: Dr. Dovid Krinsky and the Lubavitcher Rebbe

One evening, the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe's wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, called 770, as she often would, to speak with the Rebbe. The Rebbe often worked late, but on this occasion the secretary who answered informed her that he had left some time before, and was not in 770 anymore.

Now, it doesn't take much time to get from 770 to the Rebbe's house; it was long past when the Rebbe should have arrived home. Calls began to go back and forth. Nobody, not even the Rebbetzin, knew where he was; it was like the Rebbe had disappeared. Nor did anybody know the whereabouts of his car, or of Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, the Rebbe's secretary who would normally drive him.

Word got out, and before long, a crowd of concerned people began to form in front of the Rebbe's house. They were debating among themselves, wondering what to do, when all of a sudden the Rebbe's car pulled up. He got out, smiled to the chasidim as he often would, went up the stairs, and closed the door. The Rebbe had disappeared, and nobody knew where or why — only that he was back. For a couple of hours, there were only three people in the world who knew, and I was one of them.

Several years ago, when Rabbi Krinsky, who is my uncle, was sitting shiva after the passing of his wife, I visited him to give my consolations. While I was sitting with him, a certain man was escorted in through the crowd and seated right in front of my uncle. My uncle then introduced me to him as “the Rebbe’s dentist.”

Only After His Uncle Said Publicly, Did He Feel Free to Tell This Story

Hearing this description for the first time surprised me. True, it was with the Rebbe’s encouragement that I had practiced and taught dentistry for years, and that he had pushed me to accept a particular position on the faculty of Columbia Dental School. But I hadn’t felt free to mention to anyone that the Rebbe also had a more direct connection with my dentistry. Only after hearing my uncle say this publicly did I feel comfortable telling this story.

It was probably in the early 1980s when Rabbi Krinsky called me one day to say that the Rebbe needed a certain dental procedure. This was already uncommon. Normally, patients don’t call requesting a specific treatment.

“Are we certain that’s what he needs?” Yes, he replied. That was what the Rebbe had told him. Rabbi Krinsky wanted to know whether it could be done right away, in my Boro Park office, with no other staff assisting, or anyone else present. There were some logistics to be worked out, but the answer was yes.

There were also some other considerations. Since the Rebbe had sustained a heart attack in 1977, he had been advised to avoid certain medications, including one commonly used in dentistry, and so I was asked to avoid it as well. As it happened, I had been spending years trying to educate physicians that the amount of this particular substance that we use is so slight that it wouldn’t be a problem.

Spoke to the Rebbe’s Cardiologist in Chicago

So, I called the Rebbe’s cardiologist in Chicago, Dr. Ira Weiss, but I got myself educated in turn. He explained that there is a certain variation of a heart condition in which even tiny amounts of this medication could have a deleterious effect on the heart.

Next, the Rebbe directed that we did not have to use anesthesia. In forty-five years of practice, several patients have asked to have this same procedure done without dental anesthetic and I’ve refused all of them, even when they insisted that they could tolerate the pain: “Maybe you can take it, but I can’t,” I told them.

“But the Rebbe said to do it without anesthesia,” insisted Rabbi Krinsky. I figured I would talk to the Rebbe about it when he came.

The third consideration was financial. The Rebbe instructed that I must receive payment. That was a tough one; how could I bill the Rebbe? The standard fee for the procedure at that time was 20 dollars, so after much thought, I decided to tell him that his fee was 10 dollars; at least I wouldn’t be charging in full.

When the Rebbe came in, a few hours after we closed the office, everything went smoothly. After seating and examining him, I saw that the procedure was, in fact, exactly what he needed. I also saw that his procedure would not be difficult for him and could even

be done without anesthesia. This was the only instance I have ever seen where this was the case, but the Rebbe had known it in advance.



The Rebbe Asked How Much He Owed the Dentist

I finished, the Rebbe got off the chair, and we began walking back toward the reception area. As we did, the Rebbe asked me, slowly, in English, how I had evaluated the difficulty of the procedure, and how much he owed me.

“It was actually easier than I expected, and the charge is 10 dollars,” I replied, as I had decided earlier. The Rebbe continued to engage me in conversation — about superficial things like my family or my job — while he took out some bills from his pocket. He thumbed through some singles, some fives, some tens, and then handed me a twenty. I didn’t want to take it from him, and tried to find a gap in the conversation to say so, but it wasn’t there; the Rebbe had already moved on to the next subject. I also didn’t want him to stand holding his hand out, so I took the bill.

“But Rebbe,” I finally got in. “This is not the right amount.”

“That was your evaluation,” he explained. “This is my evaluation.”

Rabbi Krinsky then came in to drive the Rebbe home.

The experience was a little surreal for me; I hadn’t been nervous, but it felt like it had all happened in a different reality.

The Reason Behind the Mystery

As to why the Rebbe’s disappearance became such a mystery: The Rebbe and the Rebbetzin were in the habit of trying not to worry each other, and so he simply hadn’t told her, or anyone else, that he was going to the dentist!

Dr. Dovid Krinsky, a retired dentist — who also taught dentistry for twenty years at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine — lives in Woodmere, New York. He was interviewed in April 2023.

Reprinted from the Parshat Naso 5784 edition of Here’s My Story [with the Lubavitcher Rebbe,] a project of The JEM Foundation.

The Reward for Studying Torah in Poverty



Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner and Rabbi Aharon Kotler of blessed memories

Rav Shimon Finkelman relates a story that Rav Yitzchak Hutner, zt”l, the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Chaim Berlin, once related to Rav Aharon Kotler, zt”l, the Rosh Yeshivah of Bais Medrash Gavoha.

In the late 1800’s, a Lithuanian Jew was looking to find a Shidduch for his daughter. Someone suggested a certain young man who was known to be a Yirei Shamayim and was very diligent, who was learning in a Lithuanian Yeshivah. However, his intellectual abilities were below average.

The man wondered if he should consider this bachur for his daughter, and he decided to seek the advice of Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin, zt”l, the Rav of Brisk. Rav Yehoshua Leib listened to this man’s question, and he responded, “Chazal have taught us in Pirkei Avos (4:11) that whoever fulfills the Torah through poverty, will ultimately fulfill it in wealth.

“The Meforshim make it clear that in this context, ‘poverty’ also refers to one who is lacking intellectually. One whose natural intellect is deficient, but he learns Torah Lishmah with diligence, will ultimately be given new capabilities for learning that is far beyond what he is naturally able to do. He will then learn in ‘wealth,’ and grow great in Torah.”



**Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin,
zt'l**

The man listened to Rav Yehoshua Leib, and the shidduch was made, and the wedding took place shortly after. And just as Rav Yehoshua Leib had said, this young man eventually reached greatness in Torah. He was Rav Yosef Zundel Salant, zt'l, the Rav of Aishishok, and the Mechaber of Chedrei Dei'ah to Shulchan Aruch and other works.

Rav Kotler was Crying Profusely

As soon as Rav Hutner finished telling this story, Rav Aharon Kotler hurried out of the room. He did not return, so Rav Hutner went to see if something was wrong. He looked for a little, and he found Rav Aharon crying profusely.

Rav Hutner asked what the problem was, and Rav Aharon, barely able to speak as he wept, responded, "This sort of wealth that you mentioned, I did not merit it."

Years later, Rav Hutner explained that Rav Aharon was born a genius, and he could not possibly "learn Torah in poverty", as he had never known such poverty. However, through his own diligence and toil, Rav Aharon merited to experience a special delight in learning Torah, that actually radiated from within him, and this was visible to everyone.

The Joy of the Saying the Word Torah

In his love for Torah, he cried over his inability to merit the aspect of wealth in learning Torah that comes from learning that is accomplished in "poverty." Rav Hutner would note that if one paid close attention, he could detect the pleasure Rav Aharon got from learning Torah, simply from the way he would say the word "Torah"!

When Rav Hutner would have discussions with Rav Aharon, he would intentionally express himself in a way that would bring Rav Aharon to use the word "Torah" in his response. Rav Hutner noted that whenever Rav Aharon said the word 'Torah,' his voice was filled with every measure of sweetness that exists. He added, "Each time that I heard him utter the word 'Torah', I felt that I had gained something special!"

Reprinted from the Parshat Behalasocho 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.

The Challenge of Lashon Hara

Rav Menachem Weiss published a story about his friend, a principal of a yeshivah in Israel. This principal, his wife, and his family were known for being extremely careful about shemirat halashon—guarding the tongue and for diligently reviewing the halachot surrounding lashon hara daily.

Recently, the wife was in a situation where it was incredibly difficult for her to refrain from speaking lashon hara, but thanks to the family’s constant review of the halachot, she withstood the nisayon—test and remained silent.

Half an hour later she went into her kitchen and was horrified to find her two-year-old holding a sharp knife between his teeth. After freezing for a second, she spoke softly to him and managed to distract him enough to carefully extricate the knife from his mouth.

After she calmed down, she couldn’t help but draw the connection between her decision to keep her mouth closed and her rescue of her son’s mouth from serious injury mere moments later.

Reprinted from the Parashat Beha’alotcha 5784 email of Rabbi Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.

An Obligation for Hakaras Hatov (Gratitude)

By R’ Yoni Schwartz

As an old man, Rabbi Yaakov Neiman, ZT”L, the Rosh Yeshiva of Petach Tikva, heard about a particular vort (engagement party) that was happening on the top floor of a tall apartment building that didn’t have an elevator. Although it was not easy, he powered through and climbed to the top.

The people there who saw the esteemed Rav were shocked that he climbed all those stairs. When asked which side he came to visit, he said “I am not close with the bride or groom but once in a while one of the two sides tries to raise money for

my yeshiva, so I have to show my *hakarass hatov* (gratitude).”

He continued, “Now, you may ask, who did I learn this obligation of *hakarass hatov* from? When I was a young boy beginning to study in the Chofetz Chaim’s yeshiva, the Chofetz Chaim, ZT”L, interviewed me and asked, “Is so-and-so related to you?”

I replied, “Yes - that’s my grandfather.”

The Chofetz Chaim responded, “Once, I was traveling in your grandfather’s city without having a place to sleep and he provided lodging for me. For that, I am obligated to show my *hakarass hatov* and now is my chance.”

Since that day, the Chofetz Chaim would make sure that I was being taken care of in the best possible way. From that, I learned what *hakarass hatov* means.”

Reprinted from the Parshas Behalasocho 5784 email of Torah Sweets.

Hosting a Chasanah for Complete Strangers

By Rabbi David Ashear

Shortly before their daughter Devorah’s* scheduled chasunah (wedding) date, Mr. and Mrs. Scheiner* were notified by the manager of the hall that due to Covid restrictions, all weddings were being canceled. The couple and their families were very distraught. What to do now?

Mr. Scheiner heard from a friend about the Roths*, a wealthy couple who had a very large home and backyard. “Maybe they would agree to host the wedding?” the friend wondered. Mr. Scheiner overcame his natural shyness, went to the Roths’ home, and rang their bell. When Mr. Roth opened the door, Mr. Scheiner explained the situation.

Then, swallowing hard, he said, “I know we are complete strangers. But is there any possibility you would consider opening your home and hosting my daughter’s wedding?”

Taken aback, Mr. Roth said he would need to discuss it with his wife first. When he brought it up with her later, her response was immediate and unequivocal. “Absolutely not!”

Although he understood his wife's reluctance, he really wanted to do this chessed. "Shmuli* has been going through a very hard time since his divorce," he said. "Let's do this chessed as a zechus for our son."

When Mrs. Roth heard those words, she changed her tune. "All right. For Shmuli's sake I'm willing to do it." They immediately contacted the Scheiners and told them it would be their pleasure to host the wedding. "In fact," they added, "we would be honored to pay for it as well."

Near tears, Mr. Scheiner thanked them profusely and told the couple that the wedding was on. The Roths hired a party planner to coordinate the wedding, and it was a beautiful celebration. After the guests left, the party planner remained behind to clean up.

"This was not part of our agreement," the Roths pointed out. "Why are you going beyond the call of duty?"

"I am divorced," she said. "I decided to do this wedding free of charge as a zechus for myself to get remarried. I know it's hard for couples to get married these days, with all the Covid restrictions in place. I decided to help another couple and hopefully, in that zechus, Hashem will help me get married, too."

"Oh, yes, we certainly understand," said Mrs. Roth. "We hosted this wedding as a chessed in the zechus of our son, who is also divorced." A few months later, Mr. and Mrs. Roth had the pleasure of hosting another wedding, when their son Shmuli married the party planner! Their wedding was celebrated in the very same location, a place that was infused with chessed. (Living Emunah on Shidduchim)

Reprinted from the Parshas Behalachoso 5784 email of The Weekly Vort.

A Siddur from Heaven



Many shuls in Eretz Yisrael have the woman's balcony hovering the men section. One lady had her siddur on the ledge of the balcony when her rowdy son came and pushed it over the ledge.

You can understand that she was devastated to see her siddur flying into the men's section, but as there was still more to the davening, she headed to the sefarim shank to get another one and waited for the end to go retrieve her siddur back.

The Finder Seemed Very Emotional

After davening, she went downstairs to reclaim her siddur. When she located the person who'd found it after it dropped, she noticed that the finder seemed very emotional. She expressed her remorse for bringing her child, who had shoved the siddur down and caused it to fall to the men's section.

But the man consoled her and told her that he wasn't bothered by that. "I am from Tzefas," he began, "and recently I became a ba'al teshuva. Tonight was my very first-time attending shul. Understandably, I had mixed emotions. On the one hand, I was overjoyed to speak with Hashem, and this was my very first time doing so in a public setting. On the other hand, I was concerned attending a new crowd. I've never met these people, and I was worried as to how they would take to me.

"The last several months, I've been avoiding shul out of embarrassment, but now, with the Pesach motivation, a time of renewal brought me to shul. "When I came to shul, I was faced with my first dilemma. I'd come late and couldn't find a siddur. Sitting through Maariv without a siddur wasn't something I was looking forward to on my first time in shul. No one likes to be without a siddur, and it's especially embarrassing for a newcomer.

Asking Hashem to Show That He Cares About His Davening

"Ashamed, I snuck to the back, quietly hoping no one would notice me. I told Hashem, 'If You really desire my davening, please show me outright that my davening is worthwhile. Show me that You want it.'

"As I was sitting down siddur-less, I heard a loud bang. In front of my nose, a magnificent leatherbound siddur landed on the table. It was custom orchestrated by Hashem, showing me how my davening is wanted and treasured. I perceived Hashem's lesson, and it's left a deep impact on me and my attitude toward davening and avodas Hashem. This direct message of appreciation has left me gratefully in debt to Hashem and His mitzvos.

"Therefore, now that you know what that siddur's done for me, you can understand why there is nothing to apologize for. You were the one chosen to awaken this awareness and bring forth this connection between me and Hashem." (R' Yehoshua Nissan, on Stories to Inspire hotline)

Reprinted from Parshas Nasso 5784 email of Zichru Toras Moshe.