

# The Jewish Weekly

In Loving memory of  
**Mendy Klein**  
 ר' מנחם משה ז"ל  
 בן ר' נפתלי הירצקא  
 נפטר ל"ג בעומר  
 י"ח אייר תשע"ח  
 ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## AFTER THE DRAFT

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

In 5665 (1905), when war broke out between Russia and Japan, all Russian males below the age of 50, were commanded to report to their local draft boards. Many Jews did whatever they could to escape the draft, for in those years it was impossible to serve in the anti-Semitic Russian Army and live as a mitzvah-observant Jew. Of course, a significant number were unable to avoid being drafted, despite their mighty efforts. One of these was Mendel David Gurevich, a teacher in the city of Valitch and already the father of a large family.

Mendel David was a chassid of the Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch, so as soon as he received his draft notice, he hurried off to speak with the Rebbe. He told him of the disastrous event, the extreme difficulties it would cause his family, and how distressed they all were at the evil that had befallen them. The Rebbe blessed him and said, "G-d Al-mighty will redeem you from their hands."

But Mendel David's agitated heart felt no relief from the Rebbe's words. "Rebbe, a blessing is not enough for me; I need a promise!" he pleaded.

The Rebbe looked at him intently, and then replied, "A promise I don't have for you, but a blessing I do," and he repeated his original words. Mendel David refused to be discouraged and again requested an explicit promise, but the Rebbe merely repeated the same words for a third time.

Mendel David respectfully took his leave of the Rebbe and returned home. He strengthened himself and his faith in the Rebbe's blessing, and tried to be optimistic about the future. Nevertheless, he felt he had no choice but to make his own plans, for when he would have to appear at the draft board.

The dreaded day arrived. Mendel David reported to his assigned draft center. Thousands of new soldiers converged there with him. They passed through a series of medical tests and other examinations, under the supervision of officers who would determine who would be shipped off to battle and who would be assigned non life-threatening duties at the home front.

All Mendel David's attempts to gain an exemption were fruitless. Indeed, he was even found fit to be sent to a battle regiment. His only hope was the blessing of the Rebbe Rashab, even though it was impossible to imagine how it could possibly be fulfilled at this point. What would happen to his abandoned family? What would become of him? It seemed he needed a miracle.

At the conclusion of all the tests and classification procedures, all the draftees were assembled for their first military inspection.

The officer in charge was a General Kazaroff. With a fiery speech, he attempted to enthrone his new troops about the great merit that had fortunately come to them: to be privileged to defend with their lives, their dear, beloved mother country.

When he finished speaking, the draftees turned to go on their respective ways. The general indicated to them that they should remain where they were for just a few more moments. He strode into his headquarters, and then quickly emerged. They could see that he was holding a piece of paper in his hand.

The general glanced at the note. "Who is Gurevich Mendel?" he called out.

Mendel David began to tremble uncontrollably, from fright. He took a moment to try to figure out what could possibly be the reason that the general was singling him out in front of thousands of soldiers, but couldn't think of anything. He doubted if it could be good. Hesitatingly, he stepped forward and presented himself. The general merely glanced in his direction and said, "You are discharged. You may go home." He turned on his heels and left, leaving a stunned but ecstatic Jew momentarily frozen in place.

After a few moments, Mendel David was able to accept that it wasn't a wishful dream. It really was true! He was free to go! "I believed in the Rebbe's blessing," he said to himself as he joyfully set out for Valitch, "but I never imagined it could come true so quickly or in such extraordinary fashion."

The following Shabbat, Menachem David sponsored a large kiddush at the Chabad shul. He told them the whole story: how the Rebbe had repeated his blessing three times in identical wording, and the wondrous manner in which he had obtained his speedy release. Everyone listened in rapt attention and sincerely shared in the joy of his deliverance.

Then, one of the chassidim rose, and offered to shed light on how the Rebbe's blessing had become enclosed in this particular natural-seeming guise. "This General Kazaroff," he began, "used to live in our city. The rented apartment he dwelled in was owned by a Jew. A few months ago his landlord passed away. The heirs made clear their intention to raise the rent. Kazaroff very much wanted to continue living there, but not to pay any additional money. He approached the heirs and proposed that if they agreed to not increase his rent, he would repay them in a different way. In the upcoming large draft, he would exercise his powers as a general to obtain the release of a Valitch Jewish soldier.

"His new landlords accepted this unusual offer, and Kazaroff continued to live in the apartment for the same amount of money. About a month ago, however, he moved out. Since war had erupted, he was forced to leave Valitch and relocate nearer to the front. In the meantime, he was appointed the general in charge of the draft, and it seems he didn't forget his promise. He must have perused through the draft list for a Jewish-sounding name from Valitch, and the first one he came across presumably was that of our friend, Menachem David Gurevitch."

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

Editor's Note: Rabbi Sholom-Dovber Schneersohn, known as the Rebbe Reshab ז"ל's 100<sup>th</sup> Yahrzeit was yesterday Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nissan – March 27

## It Once Happened..

### The Amazing Amazon Seller Story

By Emuna Braverman

We all love a deal. We scour grocery store circulars and online search engines for the best prices and the latest sales. There's nothing we like better than to discover that a \$1000 airline flight has been mistakenly posted at \$100. We shake our heads in frustration if we miss the opportunity.

There are even special websites created specifically to let us know about these "steals" – be it children's toys, clothing or travel opportunities. We eagerly check our inboxes for the latest update.

Rabbi Gold describes an Amazon seller who had 28 iPads to unload. He posted them online for \$400 each and was astonished to see that they had all sold overnight. He had expected good sales but not this...

His joy turned to dismay, however, when he realized that he had mistakenly advertised them for \$40 each!

Sitting in his office, discouraged by his stunning loss, our seller noticed an email from an unfamiliar seller, "Yehuda from Lakewood."

What followed was nothing short of awe-inspiring. Having noticed our seller's post, Yehuda knew it had to be a mistake. Instead of taking advantage of the deal – and immediately informing all his friends, family and acquaintances – Yehuda decided to spare a fellow Jew pain, and purchased all the iPads himself. He now offered the seller the opportunity to buy them back at the \$40 price and resell them for \$400 as originally desired.

Our seller was amazed, dumbstruck, astonished – you name it. Things like this just don't happen in our cut-throat, dog-eat-dog business world. He never found out Yehuda from Lakewood's full name. He didn't want to be identified. He was just one Jew who went out of his way to help another.

And that's why this story is so amazing. The first step was looking beyond his own self-interest. This is already a higher level than most of us. The second step was actually acting to prevent the seller's loss, buying the iPads himself. We might look and we might even feel badly for the hapless seller, but would we think to buy them? Would we put our own money on the line?

This individual Jew's behavior was above and beyond. It didn't just show good character but spectacular character. It's really what it means to think of someone else. It's true empathy. I could go on and on. I plan to share it with all my classes, whether it's on topic or not. Because character is always the topic.

It's a rare action – which is why it's a story – but it's truly beautiful. It's an uplifting moment amidst the usual dreary and depressing news fare. I'm always waiting for the right moment to use the expression, "Mi K'Amcha Yisrael", "Almighty, Who is like Your people Israel?" I think I found it..

Reprinted from an email of Aish.com



**Y-GRAPHICS**

Shabbat Times – Vayikra

|             | Candle Lighting | Motzei Shabbat | Motzei Shabbat ר"ת |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Jerusalem   | 6:20            | 7:33           | 8:13               |
| Tel Aviv    | 6:35            | 7:35           |                    |
| Haifa       | 6:26            | 7:35           |                    |
| Be'er Sheva | 6:37            | 7:35           |                    |

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# Slice of Life

# Torah Compilations With Yossi Parshat Vayikra

## The Joy of a Mitzvah By Rabbi Yossy Gordon

*Editors note: The following story very much describes the situation we are all in at present.*

The two brothers, the famed Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk and Rabbi Zushe of Anipoli, often wandered about together posing as simple beggars. They would mingle with the masses; listening, teaching, speaking, helping and guiding whomever and whenever they could.

Once while traveling with a group of vagabonds, members of the group were accused of being thieves, resulting in the entire bunch being thrown into jail. Confident of their innocence and eventual release, the two brothers sat quietly. As the afternoon progressed, Rabbi Elimelech stood up to prepare himself to pray the afternoon service.

“What are you doing?” his brother asked

“I’m getting ready for Minchah,” replied Rabbi Elimelech.

“Dear brother,” advised Reb Zushe, “it is forbidden to pray in this cell, because there is a pail that serves as a toilet nearby, making the room unfit for prayer.”

Dejected, the holy Rabbi Elimelech sat down.

Soon after, Rabbi Elimelech began to cry. “Why are you crying?” said Rabbi Zushe. “Is it because you are unable to pray?” Reb Elimelech answered affirmatively.

“But why weep?” continued Rabbi Zushe.

“Don’t you know that the same G-d who commanded you to pray, also commanded you not to pray when the room is unfit for prayer? By not praying in this room, you have achieved a connection with G-d. True, it is not the connection that you had sought. Yet, if you truly want the Divine connection, you would be happy that G-d has afforded you the opportunity to obey His law at this time, no matter what it is.”

“You are right, my brother!” exclaimed Rabbi Elimelech, suddenly smiling. The feelings of dejection banished from his heart and mind, Rabbi Elimelech took his brother’s arm, and began to dance from joy, as a result of performing the mitzvah of not praying in an inappropriate place.

The guards heard the commotion and came running. Witnessing the two brothers dancing “with their long beards and flowing tzitzit” the guards asked the other prisoners what had happened. “We have no idea!” they answered mystified. “Those two Jews were discussing the pail in the corner, when all of a sudden they came to some happy conclusion and began to dance.”

“Is that right?” sneered the guards. “They’re happy because of the pail, are they? We’ll show them!” They promptly removed the pail from the cell.

The holy brothers then prayed Minchah undisturbed...

*Reprinted from lizensk.com.*

*Editors Note: At this moment in time, many of us have had to daven either in our homes or in shuls with only ten people present, each one keeping a distance of two meters from one another. We now have the very important, Mitzvah Hashem gave us of “וּנְשַׁמְרֶתֶם מְאֹד לְנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם”, one must absolutely look after one’s health. By keeping to the regulations stipulated by doctors and Rabbanim, we should be happy that we are doing the will of Hashem.*

How can I bring Hashem into my life? The answer comes at the beginning of Parshat Vayikra.

After calling Moshe, Hashem delivered the opening mitzvah to us, which concerns sacrifices: “אִם כִּי יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם לֵאמֹר – “if any one amongst you wishes to make a sacrifice to the Lord.” The Hebrew wording seems to be a bit clumsy. “אִם כִּי יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם” literally means “a person, if he wants to sacrifice from amongst you.” Rather, it should have said “אִם מִכֶּם” – “if any person amongst you wants to sacrifice.”

The Lubavitcher Rebbe gave a beautiful explanation. He noted that it all depends on where you pause in the verse. This is how it should be read: “אִם כִּי יִקְרִיב, מִכֶּם קִרְבָן לֵה” – “if any one of you wants to come close to the Lord, that closeness must be initiated by you.” Don’t spend a lifetime waiting for Hashem to reach out to you. Rather, we must initiate that connection, and we’ll find that Hashem responds magnificently.

Indeed, our Sages of the Talmud teach us: “פָּתַח לִי פֶתַח” – Hashem says to us, “open for me just the space of an eye of a needle, and I will expand that to become a very large space.”

There are several ways how to reach out to Hashem to start that process. An obvious way is through the practice of mitzvot; to keep Shabbat, to keep Chag, to perform deeds of kindness, etc. But there’s another great opportunity. It’s found in relating the praise of Hashem, seeing His presence in our everyday lives, and in exclaiming ‘ברוך ה’ – thank God for what is happening – regardless of the circumstances. If that is how we conduct ourselves, Hashem will respond in a tremendous way.

I believe, that the finest example of this, can be found in what is surely the most emotional of our prayers. We recite every day: “רַפְּאוּנוּ ה’ וְנִרְפָּא” – “heal us Hashem, and we will be healed” – “הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ וְנִשְׁעָה” – “save us and we will be saved” – “כִּי תִהְיֶה אֲתָה” – “because You are worthy of our praise”.

If, during illness, or challenging circumstances, we offer praise to Hashem, and recognize that He gives us what we call “הַיּוֹק” – encouragement and support – indeed He will respond. He will keep us going & help us ultimately succeed.

Parshat Vayikra opens with the words “וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים” – “Hashem called out to Moshe.” Don’t presume that this just suddenly happened – rather, it followed Moshe calling out to Hashem, who then responded magnificently, “אִם כִּי יִקְרִיב”.

So let us remember therefore, that if any person wants to come close... “מִכֶּם קִרְבָן לֵה” – he needs to initiate that closeness, so let’s pray for our soldiers who go out to protect us, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah, and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, happy, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual and sweet Shabbat.

**The Jewish Weekly**  
**Pesach**  
 Halachot, Minhagim and more  
 for the year 2020 / 5780

According to Nitei Gavriel, Shulchan Aruch and Shulchan Aruch Harav  
 All times listed are for Eretz Yisrael only as per [www.myzmanim.com](http://www.myzmanim.com)  
 Based on Rabbi Shimon's Halachah Sheets  
 Compiled by Rabbi Yoram Fraenkel  
 in memory of his grandparents

**Coming Soon**

*Yossi*  
**The Jewish Weekly's**  
**PARSHA FACTS**

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 16  
 MITZVOT ASEH: 11  
 MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 5

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 111  
 NUMBER OF WORDS: 1673  
 NUMBER OF LETTERS: 6222

HAFTORA:  
 Yeshaya 43:21-44:23