

# 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.

## Heavenly Protection from A Book and a Rabbi

By Rabbi Shmuel Butman

One evening, in the mid 1960s in the synagogue and study hall of the Husyatim Rebbe, Rabbi Yitzchak Friedman, in Tel Aviv, a man entered whose outer appearance was quite different than that of the usual crowd of chassidim sitting singly or in pairs, immersed in Torah study. His look was that of a typical Israeli, of middle age, with a kippah (yarmulke) on his head attached by a large clip.

The man walked directly to the wall of bookcases and began scanning the shelves. Finally, he found what he was looking for, a volume of Ohr HaChaim, the famous and beloved commentary on the Torah by the 18th century sage and kabbalist from Sali, Morocco and, in his later years, in Jerusalem.

The man carried the book to a table in the corner of the hall, opened it to the Torah portion of the week, and began to learn it aloud with great enthusiasm.

One of the chassidim, Rabbi Mordechai Shraga Bauminger, named for his great-grandfather, the first Husyatim Rebbe, youngest son of the Holy Rhizhiner, looked up from his tome of the Talmud. Something about the man's devoted study had attracted his attention. He wondered who he was, and why he had entered specifically the Husyatim center to study Ohr HaChaim, a set that can be found in every serious Torah library in the world.

After a while, he looked up again and decided to go and ask the man directly. He sat down next to him and initiated a conversation. With visible reluctance the man tore himself away from the sefer. But when he found out that the chassid speaking to him was a descendant of the first two Husyatim Rebbes, his eyes opened wide in wonder and he said, If so, perhaps you are the right person for me to tell what happened to me today, and my connection to your maternal grandfather.

The man inserted a piece of paper for a bookmark and closed the book. He composed himself for a moment and then began his tale.

"My name is Natanel. I currently live in Haifa. I was born in the Western Ukraine, in a town where most of the inhabitants were Husyatim chassidim, including my parents. In 1937, while I was still a child, the Rebbe (Rabbi Yisrael Friedman), your grandfather, left the Ukraine to live in Israel.

"Because of the extreme harsh conditions in the era, and also because the great distance of the Rebbe, my parents weakened greatly in their chassidic ways and ceased their connection to the Husyatim community.

"When I became a teenager, I joined the Club for Zionist Fulfillment. There they cultivated in us the Zionist vision, the idealism of working for the land of Israel, the value of physical fitness and agricultural labor, and so forth.

Unfortunately they offered no Torah classes there, or any respect for Jewish religiosity, and eventually our entire youth group relinquished all commitment to fulfill the Torah's commandments.

"The club also organized a group to make aliyah. Years later, soon after WWII, we were able to fulfill our dream.

"Upon arrival in Israel we were full of idealism, enthusiasm and energy. But with the passage of time practicality crept in and the group slowly fell apart. Each one became primarily involved in building his own individual world.

"For me, the dissolution of idealism and the Zionist dream led to an inkling of desire and a gradual return to my traditional roots. I began to wear a kippah again and to attend Torah lectures and classes, first sporadically and then more often. Eventually I returned to Shabbat observance, wrapped tefillin daily, and was much more careful about kosher diet.

"During that time period I would sometimes recall a vision from my childhood: my father sitting at a table and studying Ohr HaChaim on the weekly Torah Reading. I resolved that I too would study Ohr HaChaim on a regular basis, and so I have done for years now.

"One night a few weeks ago, after I went to sleep, I suddenly felt that I was choking horribly, strangling even. I could sense my heart ceasing to beat. Then I fell into a deep faint.

"But then everything changed and I seemed to be flying upwards through the air. A unique radiant light was blinding my eyes. I became overwhelmed with the certainty that I was now in a spiritual realm, in the World of Truth.

"Mysterious forms that I couldn't recognize took hold of me and transported me to a brightly lit hall. A table stood in the middle. Two distinguished looking men were sitting on opposite sides. I understood that I was now in the Heavenly Court and that they were waiting for the chief judge to come and take his place in the chair between them, so that my trial could begin.

"Right then a distinguished, bearded elder entered the room and sat on a seat awaiting him. Before officially opening the case, the new arrival queried the other two judges, 'Is it really already the time for this man to come up here?'

"Silence.

"A few moments later, the elder spoke again. 'Is it not so that he faithfully and devotedly studies Ohr HaChaim?'

"Silence.

"Suddenly the courtroom disappeared, and again I was flying at great speed through the air, this time downwards. And then I was awake! Sitting up on my bed, trembling uncontrollably, terrified and emotionally overwhelmed.

"The dream had a tremendous effect on me. It aroused and inspired me with the determination and inner strength to improve myself in all aspect of my

## It Once Happened..

life including of course to take extra care in maintaining my Ohr HaChaim study schedule.

"This morning I came to Tel Aviv to take care of some affairs. As I was walking along, I noticed three men in full chassidic garb further up the street. I could see from their formation that the two younger ones were escorting the older man between them. This aroused my curiosity to see what the subject of their respectful attention looked like, so I quickened my pace. When I caught a glimpse from the side of the contour of his face I almost fainted. He was the head judge of the Heavenly Court that I saw in my dream!

"I had to find out who he was! I followed behind them discreetly until I found the opportunity to ask one of the young chassidim privately about the identity of the man they were escorting. He told me he was the Admor (Chassidic Rebbe) of Husyatim.

"What a shock! At that moment a vision appeared before my eyes, a memory of my childhood when my parents were faithful chassidim, when my father would take me to the synagogue and I would see the Rebbe. This current Rebbe, who must be the grandson of Reb Yisrael from the Ukraine, looked just like him.

"I was shaking with excitement. I decided to follow them. I knew I had to make a strong effort to speak to the Rebbe privately, even if that would prove to be difficult.

"They led me here to the Husyatim center. I prayed Mincha there, and through a window I could see the Rebbe immersed in his prayer together with a minyan. Again I was reminded of the Husyatim chassidic atmosphere in my home town.

"After the last kaddish, I requested of the Rebbe's personal attendant to allow me to enter the Rebbe's room for a private audience. When he exited the Rebbe's room, he held the door open and signaled me to go in.

"The Rebbe looked up at me with a penetrating stare. Then he said, kindly,

'Who are you and what is your request?'

"I was so overwhelmed with emotion I couldn't bring myself to speak. When I finally regained control of myself, I said, 'Do I really have to tell the Rebbe who I am? Was it not only two weeks ago that the Rebbe ruled in my favor for life in the Heavenly Court?' Then I burst into uncontrollable tears.

"When I finally calmed down, the Rebbe extended his hand to me for that traditional limp handshake, and while still holding my hand said, 'Nu, G-d Almighty should bless you with long years and a good, prosperous life.'

"I left his presence still in a very emotional state. I thought to myself the best thing to calm down would be to study some Ohr HaChaim, since in the merit of doing so I had been granted a new lease on life. So here I am."

Reprinted from an email of Sichat HaShavua #1381.

Editor's Note: the Ohr HaChaim - Rabbi Chaim Ben Attar ז"ל's, 277<sup>th</sup> Yahrzeit is Tuesday, 15th Tammuz - July 7th of this year



**YF GRAPHICS**

Shabbat Times - Balak

|             | Candle Lighting | Motzei Shabbat | Motzei Shabbat<br>ר"ת |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Jerusalem   | 7:13            | 8:31           | 9:05                  |
| Tel Aviv    | 7:28            | 8:33           |                       |
| Haifa       | 7:21            | 8:35           |                       |
| Be'er Sheva | 7:29            | 8:32           |                       |



## Two Missions Completed By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles



Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam, the Klausenberger Rebbe

The Klausenberger chassidim wanted to call a doctor; maybe there was still something that could be done to help their ailing Rebbe, Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam. But the Rebbe would not hear of the suggestion. Instead he said, "Let me tell you a story."

Rabbi Yoel Sirkes (1561-1640), later to be renowned as the "Bach" (the initials of his book Bayit Chadash) one day visited his son-in-law, Rabbi David ben Shmuel HaLevi (1586-1667), later to be renowned as the "Taz" (for his book Turei Zahav.) When Rabbi Yoel arrived, the entire town went out to welcome him with the traditional greeting of "Shalom Aleichem" except for one young scholar, who did not step forward.

"What nerve!" Rabbi David objected to the young man, upset by the dishonor to his esteemed father-in-law.

"I was informed by Elijah the Prophet himself, that Rabbi Yoel has been placed in a ban of excommunication by the Heavenly Court, and for this reason I did not extend a formal greeting to him," replied the young man.

Rabbi David was shocked by this response. He asked the scholar for more details.

"Once, Rabbi Yoel was passing through a certain town. Two men were arguing about a wagon full of wood that one man had sold to the other. The purchaser claimed that he had agreed to a price of three gold coins while the seller was adamant that he had sold it for 3 1/10 gold coins.

"When the two men saw Rabbi Yoel, they asked him if he would arbitrate their claim.

"What amount of money is under dispute," asked Rabbi Yoel.

"One-tenth of a gold coin," they responded.

"I should delay my journey and be inconvenienced for one-tenth of a gold coin?" Rabbi Yoel remonstrated.

"The accusing angels in heaven had a heyday with the rabbi's flippant comment, for our Sages teach, 'A

suit involving one copper coin is to be treated as earnestly as a suit involving a hundred coins." Rabbi David hurried to his father-in-law to ascertain whether or not this story was true.

Indeed, Rabbi Yoel remembered the incident as it was out of character for him to have made such a comment.

The two men realized, that this young scholar had been brought by Divine Providence into their midst on this day, in order to help Rabbi Yoel do teshuva (repent) and set things right. They convened a Rabbinical Court that immediately annulled the Heavenly ban.

Rabbi Yoel then approached the young man and asked him a favor. "I see that you are an upright and G-d fearing person in the eyes of Heaven. I therefore would like to give you my manuscript, a commentary on the Arba Turim (a section of the Code of Jewish Law) that I plan to publish under the title Bayit Chadash. Before I publish it I would like you to look it over and give me your opinion." The young man agreed. A little while later, Rabbi Yoel approached the young man and asked if he had had a chance to look over the manuscript and was ready to return it.

"I will not return it to you even in twenty years," responded the young scholar.

Shocked, Rabbi Yoel asked for an explanation. "Does my work not meet your approval? If so, tell me what is wrong with it for I gave it to you so that you would look it over with a critical eye." The young man said, "Your book is good and does good. However, as soon as you publish it and it is distributed around the world, you will have completed your life's mission and there will be no reason for you to live in this world. Therefore, I will do all I can to delay its publication so that you remain here with us in this world."

"If that is the reason why you have withheld your comments, then I will not delay its publication," said Rabbi Yoel. "For, as you yourself noted, the world needs it."

The young man had no option but to return the manuscript to its author, who set about publishing it, volume by volume. Over the course of nine years it was published.

In 1640, soon after the publication of the final volume, Rabbi Yoel Sirkes passed away in his eightieth year.

The Sanz-Klausenberger Rebbe completed his story. Then he added, "So it is with me. If, with G-d's help I have completed my mission here in this world, then I have nothing to do here and do not want you to call another doctor."

*Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.  
Editor's Note: Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam - the Klausenberger Rebbe ז"ל's, 26th Yahrzeit was Wednesday, 9th Tammuz - July 1st this year.*

If animals could talk to us, what would they say?

We actually know the answer to this question – because parshat Balak presents to us a situation in which an animal spoke to a human being. The 'אתן – the donkey of Bilam addressed him' and said 'מה עשיתי לך כי הכיני זה שלש רגלים – what have I done to you to deserve the fact that you have struck me these three times'. On this single occasion on which an animal has spoken, the one thing that the animal addressed was the cruelty dealt by a human being to it. This is such an important message because it's not the donkey that wanted us to hear it, it is Hashem via the mouth of the donkey, who wanted to give us this message for all time.

I heard from Rabbi Mirvis, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, a further, deeper message incorporated in what the animal said. Rashi highlights the fact that the term 'שלש רגלים' is used – 'these three occasions on which you struck me'. Of course, we associate the phrase 'שלש רגלים' with the three pilgrim festivals – Pesach, Shavuot and Succot – on which the nation would descend during temple times to Jerusalem in order to celebrate the festivals there. Therefore, Rashi said that the donkey's hidden message to Bilam was: 'you are intending to destroy a nation – you have no chance whatsoever because they observe the three pilgrim festivals'.

The message that is being conveyed here is that these three pilgrim festivals represent 'אמונה – faith'. On these three occasions in the year, farmers would leave their fields behind them, place their trust in Hashem and go to Jerusalem for a festival. I believe that the donkey was providing an essential message to the Bilams of this world who seek to destroy Am Yisrael'.

There are many things which preserve us as a nation. There are many true and authentic keys to our continuity, for example, הוראה – Jewish education, Jewish cultural activity, Jewish food, socializing with Jewish people, a connection with Jewish history, a connection with Jewish suffering, a connection with the state of Israel. All are great keys to the continuity of our faith. But there is one particular key which transcends them all. It is 'אמונה – faith'.

The 'שלש רגלים', the three pilgrim festivals represent faith in Hashem. And the message for us is that the enemies of our people will never prevail for as long as we have 'אמונה – faith'. When we put our trust in Hashem, when we are dedicated to Him, when we fulfil the commandments of the Torah which He has given to us – that, more than anything, will preserve the Jewish people.

You can have countless kiddushim, cultural activities, history lessons, visits to places of Jewish interest around the world, but nothing will preserve us in the way that genuine and deeply-rooted faith in Hashem will. This is something which even a donkey realized – how much more so, therefore, should we.

Especially in today's world, with what we are going through, the most important thing is to have 'אמונה – faith'. So let's try to have faith in Hashem and let's pray with all our hearts, for the recovery of all the sick from this crazy pandemic, as well as praying for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevr Kadisha members worldwide, and those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet and happy Shabbat.

Yossi

## The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 0

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 104  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1455  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5357

HAFTORA: Micah 5:6 - 6:8

Thursday, July 9, is Shiva Asar B'Tammuz, 17 Tammuz, a Public Fast Day, the beginning of the Three Weeks, see Halachot and Minhagim guide for further information.

This week we study Chapter 6 (Diaspora and some in Israel study chapter 5) of Pirkei Avot