

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.

Saved by a Match

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

During the 1930s, Poland was under rule of a semi-fascist clique called the "Government of Colonels." During this period the Jewish community, which constituted approximately ten percent of Poland's total population, was in an extremely precarious position. New edicts were being issued daily, edicts which were strangling the economic and cultural life of the Jewish minority.

After Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, the Poles were only too happy to step up their acts of anti-Semitism. One very popular ploy was to accuse a Jew of insulting the Polish people or the Polish government. The accused would be brought before a judge, usually an anti-Semite himself, who would almost always sentence the Jew to a lengthy prison term.

The Polish Treasury Department also had a hand in reducing the Jews to financial ruin. Its officers routinely interpreted the laws in a manner which served to economically break Jewish merchants and artisans. When, as often happened, a Jew was unable to meet the excessive taxes, a tax collector would come to his home or place of business and confiscate his merchandise and household furnishings.

In 1935, in the tiny village of Kreszowice, near Cracow, there lived a Jew by the name of Israel Weiner. It happened that he fell behind with his tax payments, and his home was visited by the tax collector, accompanied by a policeman. They had come to requisition his belongings in lieu of the unpaid taxes.

Among Israel Weiner's possessions was his greatly valued sewing machine. When not in use, it was draped with a linen cover adorned by an embroidered white eagle, the Polish national emblem. The tax collector ordered Weiner to lift this cover so that he and his companion could inspect what was beneath it. When they were through, Weiner lowered the cover back onto the smooth surface but, in his nervousness, did not take care to center it properly and one side hung down lower than the other. Within a few moments the cover began to slip and soon, unnoticed by Weiner, it was on the floor.

The tax collector ordered Weiner to show him another piece of furniture. As Weiner began to cross the room, followed by the two men, his foot caught hold of the crumpled cover on the floor, and he stepped on the cloth.

"Aha!" cried the policeman gleefully. "See how this Jew treats the symbol of his country!" Despite Israel Weiner's pleas and explanations, despite his pointing out that he used the cloth decorated with the Polish national symbol to cover his most prized possession, charges were drawn up and he was summoned to court.

A day was set for the trial, and a magistrate appointed. To Weiner's dismay, the judge was a notorious anti-Semite, and he knew that the probability of a severe sentence was high.

On the eve of the trial, the nervous and depressed defendant went to the Bobover Rebbe, Rabbi Bentzion Halberstam, for a blessing. Weeping profusely, he told the Rebbe his woeful story. The

Rebbe gave his blessing, expressing his hope and belief that G-d would help the desperate man, and then added some very strange instructions.

"Tomorrow, when you go to court," the Rebbe said, "take with you a matchbox containing only one match. Then, when you notice a member of the court taking out a cigar or a cigarette during the proceedings - as someone inevitable will - you, Israel, will step forward and offer him your matchbox."

Weiner was puzzled until the Rebbe explained the rest of the plan, and advised him to inform his lawyer about it. "You have nothing to lose, and much to gain," said the Rebbe.

The next day at court, as expected, the public prosecutor released his venom on the trembling Jew. "Would you dare tread upon your Holy Scroll?" he challenged, his voice full of thunder. "For such a disrespectful act against his country, this man deserves the maximum sentence under the law!"

As the prosecutor continue to rant, the judge, becoming excited at the prospect of meting out a harsh punishment to this helpless Jew, began to fumble in his pocket for a cigarette. Israel, alert to such a move as he had been instructed, quickly stepped forward and offered his matchbox - containing only one match - to the judge. Absent-mindedly, the judge accepted the matchbox, lit his cigarette and tossed the empty matchbox into the waste basket.

However, in those days all matches were distributed solely by the Polish government, so every matchbox bore the emblem of the Polish national eagle. The defense lawyer, who had been waiting for this moment, jumped out of his seat. "Your honor," he cried, "I must bring a very urgent matter to your attention!"

All eyes were on him. How dare he interrupt the proceeding with such an outburst? In a ringing voice, the lawyer for the defense continued his bid for attention. "The honor of our national symbol, the Polish white eagle, has been insulted in this very room, only a moment ago!" he boomed.

As everyone stared at him in astonishment, he continued. "Look into the waste basket! You will see the image of the Polish white eagle imprinted on a matchbox, amidst the refuse. The honor of our beloved country is at stake! And it is His Honor, the magistrate himself, who is guilty of this violation!"

Stifled laughter was heard from the back of the courtroom, and then the laughter became louder and the audience began to applaud.

The defendant then sprang up, wringing his hands, and cried out, "Your Honor, I am the father of small children! Please have mercy on me! I am a devout patriot; I cover my most cherished possession with our beloved national symbol. My stepping on the white eagle emblem that was on my sewing machine cover was no more an act of disrespect than was your casting an empty matchbox into the garbage!"

The room was silent for a moment, the judge shifted in his seat.

"Case dismissed!" he said.

*Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.
 Editor's Note: the Bobover Rebbe, Rabbi Bentzion Halberstam ז"ל's, 79th Yahrzeit is Today, Shabbat, 4th Menachem Av - July 25th.*

It Once Happened..

The Fifteen-Seconds Sermon

By Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein relates about the previous Bobover Rebbe, Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam, (the son of Rabbi Bentzion Halberstam whose 79th yahrzeit is today), that he was a wellspring of sensitivity for all Jews, and how he was able to overcome any feelings of anger and hurt in order to pursue peace. His activities during and after World War II saved many Jews, both physically and spiritually. However, as it goes with great people, they will inevitably have detractors - people who are filled with envy and seek glory.

Shortly after the Bobover Rebbe came to America, a local rabbi who felt threatened by the Bobover Rebbe's activities on behalf of world Jewry, strongly criticized the Rebbe, and personally attacked his character. The Bobover Rebbe did not respond to the attack.

Eventually, the slanderous remarks became humiliating. The Rebbe summoned all of his chassidim to assemble in his Beit Midrash [study hall & synagogue]. The large shul was filled to capacity; everyone had crammed in to hear the Rebbe's response to the insults that had been launched at him.

The Bobover Rebbe entered the Beit Midrash, ascended to the front of the Holy Ark where the Torah scrolls are kept, and after kissing the outer curtain, turned to the people gathered there. He said, "I am declaring to everyone assembled here, as I stand in front of the Holy Ark, that I absolutely forbid anyone from battling on my behalf! My honor is my honor, and it will remain my honor, but only if everyone acts appropriately and does not take sides. Whoever does not obey me has no place in my Beit Midrash!"

Having spoken for a total of fifteen seconds, the Rebbe descended the podium and left the shul.

A few hours later, the Rebbe asked his attendant to take him to the attacking rabbi's home. By then, word of the Rebbe's response had already spread throughout the community. The Rebbe arrived at the rabbi's house and knocked on the door.

The rabbi answered the door, and when he realized who was standing before him, his face turned white. The Bobover Rebbe understood that words were not necessary - it was action that was needed. He took the rabbi in both his arms, hugged him and kissed him on the cheek.

Then he said, "Dear rabbi, you may go to any one of my chassidim and they will attest to the fact that I have no bad feelings towards you at all. Just as we were once friends, we will continue to remain friends!"

The rabbi was a changed person as a result of that encounter, and the attacks stopped. The Bobover Rebbe corrected the situation by expressing his love for a fellow Jew instead of responding with anger, even though there was great reason for him to get angry.

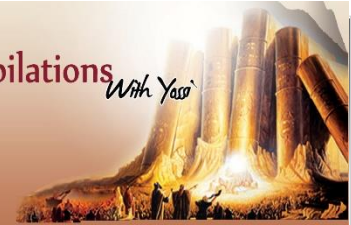
*Reprinted from an email of "Torah U'Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights".
 Editor's Note: the Bobover Rebbe, Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam ז"ל's, 20th Yahrzeit was Wednesday, 1st Av - July 22nd of this year.*



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Devarim

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	7:06	8:21	8:57
Tel Aviv	7:21	8:24	
Haifa	7:14	8:25	
Be'er Sheva	7:22	8:22	



An Unusual Reward By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

When the Maharshel heard of the Kabbalah interpretations that the AriZal [Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, 1534-1572] was teaching and the wonders he was performing in Tsfat (Safed), he feared these miracles were black magic and seriously considered excommunicating the AriZal and his disciples. The AriZal became aware of this development and decided to send his two most important students to Lublin to present his teachings to the Maharshel (who also happened to be a relative of his -ed.) and prevent such a terrible mistake. The disciples were great righteous men in their own right, none other than Rabbi Chaim Vital (who was later to become the chief disseminator of the AriZal's teachings in North Africa and the Mideast) and Rabbi Yisrael Srug (who would be the major exponent in Europe).

As "payment" for the trip, the AriZal revealed to them a deep secret: the name and whereabouts of the Moshiach ben David ["Messiah"] of their generation. In every generation, the AriZal explained, a Mashiach descended from David and a Mashiach descended from Yosef is born. If the generation is undeserving, they pass from the world without revealing themselves. "The current candidate to be Mashiach ben David is called Eliyakim ben Shmuel and lives in the village of Tisavitch which is not far from Lublin. After finishing your mission, as a reward for your efforts, you may visit the Mashiach of our time," said the AriZal to his students as he blessed them on their departure.

Rabbi Chaim and Rabbi Yisrael set out, taking with them special delicacies of Tsfat, hot from the oven. Shortly thereafter they were picked up by a passing cloud that took them all the way to Lublin and deposited them - not surprisingly - at the entrance to the synagogue where the Maharshel prayed. They arrived exactly on time for the afternoon prayer.

The sudden appearance of these two Jews of holy countenance dressed in the impressive garments of 16th century Tsfat caused quite a stir. As a result of a certain incident which then took place in the shul (A long story in itself) the Maharshel understood that these were very special and holy visitors indeed.

The two men introduced themselves and their mission. They told the Maharshel that only that morning had they left Tsfat and, as proof, their Israeli food was still warm. The Maharshel asked them to reveal the teachings of their master, the AriZal, so that he could judge for himself. "So secret and holy are the teachings," explained the visitors, "that we can reveal them only in an isolated location, away from over-sensitive ears."

They went down to the Maharshel's dark basement. As soon as the tzaddikim began to relate the teachings of their

master, the room filled with light. Afterwards, the Maharshel declared that his attitude had changed. He promised them that not only had he given up any idea of declaring a ban, but from then on he would consider himself to be one of his young kinsman's great admirers.

* * *

The AriZal's two disciples went on to Tisavitch to claim their reward. Upon arriving, however, they found Reb Eliyakim's whereabouts to be unknown. Indeed, his very existence was seriously doubted by even the most informed elders of the town. The Tsfat Kabbalists proceeded to the house of the local rabbi and asked him about Eliyakim, the son of Shmuel, but to no avail. In desperation, they revealed to the rabbi the true nature of their mission.

After much effort on the part of the rabbi and the different people he drafted to help, they finally succeeded in tracking down the elusive Reb Eliyakim. The two visitors wasted no time making their way to his home, along with the rabbi of Tisavitch who insisted on accompanying them.

Once at the house of the potential Mashiach ben David of the generation, to their surprise they found only one small room, two broken down beds, and one table ready to fall apart and a chair. Reb Eliyakim himself lay in bed, and his wife was at the stove which stood in the middle of the house.

After being greeted by the hosts, who were surprised but excited to have visitors, especially the rabbi and such holy looking travelers, the guests introduced themselves. "We are the students of the holy AriZal, from the holy city of Tsfat, in the holy land of Israel, and we have been told that you are our generation's candidate for the task of Mashiach ben David."

"Oh! the AriZal and his revelations! He has done me and himself great damage." Reb Eliyakim exclaimed. "As a result of this secret becoming uncovered," he continued, "I must depart from the world. My last request is that you personally take charge of the funeral and all involved. On the gravestone please write: Here lies a truthful and honest man. 12 Elul 5332." (To be noted: the AriZal passed away just 11 months later, 5 Av 5333.)

With these words, Eliyakim ben Shmuel passed away, leaving behind him a world still unworthy of Mashiach. (There are some who say that this revelation had such a tragic end because of the presence of the rabbi of the town; had the AriZal's pupils come by themselves, the result would have been different.)

* * *

After the funeral, Rabbi Chaim and Rabbi Yisrael went to visit the widow in her mourning. They questioned her about the deeds of her husband.

"I married very young" his wife replied. "All the years my deceased husband was very ill. I myself provided whatever living we had. Most of the time he lay in bed. However, right before Shabbat there would be a drastic change - the house would become wider and longer and a fully set table with the best of Shabbat dishes would appear. Then a group of very holy looking visitors would arrive, always bringing with them a Torah scroll. My husband would become strong and healthy and together with the guests, would spend the entire Shabbat in prayer, study and eating the three traditional meals.

"After the Saturday night prayer and havdalah, the house would shrink back to its weekday size, the guests would disappear and my husband would return to his bed. This was the schedule every week since our marriage."

"Why didn't you ever tell anyone about this wondrous miracle?," she was asked. Seeing how amazed everyone was by what she had so innocently told, she explained, "I know that a bride is like a queen and the groom is like a king. Therefore I assumed that this happens in every Jewish household, on every Shabbat after the wedding."

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

Editor's Note: Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the "Holy AriZal," ז"ל, 448th Yahrzeit is tomorrow, Sunday, 5th Menachem Av - July 26th.

The sort of hidden theme to Sefer Devarim is this passuk, "השיבנו ה' אליך ונשובה חדש ימינו כקדם" - Bring us home Hashem, and we are coming, renew our days like they once were."

This Shabbat, we start and we finish. We start Sefer Devarim, and we also read the third and final of the Haftorot of Tochacha. The rest of the Haftorot in Sefer Devarim are the Haftorot of Nechama, of consolation. All in the spirit of Hashem telling us "come home".

At the end of Eicha on Tisha B'av, we say Hashiveinu. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is all about "Hashiveinu", it's there and in the background. We need to believe it.

This week's Parsha starts off with Moshe speaking to Klal Yisrael and of his sensitivity to the dignity of Klal Yisrael, he does not say "Remember when you messed up doing this wrong and that wrong etc" Instead it is "Remember when we were there, and there, and the other place, and Hashem was not happy with us". He was using the names of the places as a point of reference to hint at what they did, while trying to protect their dignity.

Rashi tells us, that this was for the purpose of giving them mussar. The Ramban has a different understanding however. The Ramban learns that this was to teach the Jewish nation that no matter what a person has ever done, Hashem in his infinite Midat Hachessed, always forgives and gives him a new chance.

Friends, as we end these 9 Days, days when we are supposed to feel the lack of a home, and the ones occupying the Har Habayit, our ultimate home, are doing a great job at showing us that we are not home just yet.

So let this story sink into us and let us cry together "השיבנו ה' אליך ונשובה חדש ימינו כקדם". Bring us home Hashem, and let us merit to see Moshiach speedily in our times 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 Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for 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 Shabbat and an easy and meaningful fast.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 2
MITZVOT ASEH: 0
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 2

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 105
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1548
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5972

HAFTORA:
Yeshayahu 1:1 - 27 (Some read it to the special melody of Eichah)

This Shabbat before the fast of Tisha B'Av, (Wednesday, July 29), is called Shabbat Chazon - the 'Shabbat of Vision', because of the Haftora which is read from the first chapter of the Book of Yeshayahu, which begins "Chazon Yeshayahu - (the vision of Yeshayahu...)". In it, he prophesies about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Beit Hamikdash.

(The three Haftorot of the three weeks preceding the Ninth of Av, are called the — שלש דפורנותא - the "Three (Haftorot) of Punishment").

WEDNESDAY AUG. 5, IS TU B'AV.

This week we study Chapter 3 (Diaspora and some in Israel study chapter 2) of Pirkei Avot

ותחינה עיינו בשובר לציון ברהמים...
TISHA B'AV 2020
1952 years since the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash
ט' באב התש"פ
1952 שנים לחורבן בית המקדש
צום קל ומועיל!
Have an easy and meaningful fast!
שיבה בית המקדש במרה במינו
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