

# 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.

## The Holy Silver Thief

By Rabbi Menachem Posner

When Rabbi Nathan Schapiro was still young, before his name as a master of the Talmud and Kabbalah spread far and wide, he quietly devoted his life to asceticism, Torah study, prayer and contemplation.

The only one to know the full extent of his rich inner world was his wife, Roza, whom he cautioned never to reveal what she saw and heard.

It once happened that Roza, the daughter of one of Krakow's most generous and upstanding men, slipped and told her sisters about her husband's nightly regimen, which included a tearful rendition of Tikkun Chatzot, the midnight prayer for the arrival of Moshiach. "Do you know," she said with pride, "that my husband prays and cries every night with such devotion that the angels themselves come to listen? He even warned me to make sure that the door to his room is carefully locked every night, for if someone were to see him in the midst of his devotions, that person would be in grave danger."

The sisters shared the juicy tidbit about their "eccentric" brother-in-law with their husbands, who listened with a mixture of interest and disdain.

The following night, the brothers-in-law decided to see for themselves what the fuss was all about. During the time that Rabbi Nathan went down to the river for his nightly ritual immersion, the young men crept into his room and hid under the bed.

Rabbi Nathan returned from the river and unsuspectingly went about his usual lofty pursuits. After sitting on the floor and crying bitter tears over the long and painful exile, he sat down at the table to study Torah for the remainder of the night.

It was only the next morning that the tragedy was discovered. The two brothers-in-law were found under Rabbi Nathan's bed, lifeless.

The entire family was plunged into deep sadness, and none were more sad than Rabbi Nathan, who considered himself guilty of unintentional manslaughter, for which the biblical punishment was exile.

Rabbi Nathan swore his wife to secrecy and then set out on a protracted journey from town to town. He refused to accept food or accommodations, instead subsisting on the meager provisions he carried on his back and sleeping in the local hekdesch (charity guest house) among other indigent travelers. When people asked the noble-looking stranger what his name was and where he was from, he just smiled sadly and said nothing.

Meanwhile, back home, his father-in-law's grief knew no bounds. His two sons-in-law had passed away in one night, and the third one

disappeared without a trace. Yet, as much as he grilled his daughter about the whereabouts of her husband, the young woman remained tight-lipped.

At a loss, he wrote letters to rabbis and communal leaders in the surrounding cities and towns, describing his son-in-law's appearance and begging them to please relay any information they may have.

In the meantime, Rabbi Nathan continued to travel from town to town, eventually arriving in the large community of Lublin to the northeast of Krakow.

It was the night before Sukkot, the holiday when every Jew makes a point to eat in the sukkah and recite the blessings over the Four Kinds in the morning. Eager to fulfill these mitzvahs, Rabbi Nathan made an exception and accepted the offer of an upstanding citizen of Lublin, who kindly invited him to spend the holiday in his home.

After the evening prayers, Rabbi Nathan followed his host into the sukkah. According to tradition, every sukkah is visited by seven guests: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and King David. Temporarily forgetting himself, Rabbi Nathan joyfully called out, "Come in supernal guests, come in!"

His host heard and immediately sensed that his guest was no simple vagabond. Rabbi Nathan remembered himself and quickly resumed the silence that had become second nature to him. Even though he refused his host's entreaties to share Torah thoughts or lead the singing, his refined comportment and modest table manners reinforced his host's suspicion that he was a great Torah scholar.

When the meal ended, Rabbi Nathan asked his host to allow him to remain in the sukkah. Full of admiration, the host agreed, and did not even bother removing the silver serving dishes that were still on the table.

As soon as he was alone, Rabbi Nathan took a small Kabbalah book out of his pocket and was deeply engrossed in his learning. He was so absorbed in his study that he did not even hear a thief enter the sukkah and deftly remove all the valuable utensils from the table.

The host returned some time later and saw a table bereft of utensils and the stranger with his nose in a book.

"You cannot fool me!" he shouted at the surprised Rabbi Nathan. "You stole the silver, and now you cloak yourself in piety and pretend to be studying Kabbalah. Fess up and tell me where you put the dishes."

Yet, as much as he was cajoled, threatened and begged, Rabbi Nathan had no idea where the silver was, and was certainly not about to admit to having stolen it.

Rabbi Nathan was then unceremoniously locked up in the town hekdesch, where he was told he would remain until he confessed his crime.

## It Once Happened..

Rabbi Nathan was not concerned for his honor or about the discomfort of his confinement. His sole concern was how he would be able to fulfill the next morning's mitzvah to make a blessing over the Four Kinds. He therefore stuck his head out of the small window of the hekdesch and begged passers-by to please bring him a lulav and etrog so that he could do the mitzvah.

Word spread, and even the rabbi of the town heard about the strange thief who shamelessly stole silver and studied Kabbalah and boldly asked that a lulav and etrog be brought to him.

Curious, he made his way to the hekdesch to observe the stranger, whom he immediately recognized as the runaway son-in-law described in the letter he had received from Krakow.

"Come with me," he said, taking the young man with him to his private study. "The game is up. I know who you are. You're the brilliant young man who ran away from Krakow. Your father-in-law is beside himself with grief. You must go home."

Left with no choice, Rabbi Nathan admitted that the rabbi was right and told him of the chain of events that led him to leave home and take up the wanderer's stick. The rabbi then left the study and assured his congregation that Rabbi Nathan was in no way a thief.

Later, Rabbi Nathan told the rabbi that he saw the fact that his identity was discovered in such a shameful way as a sign from above that his penance was accepted, and that he was now ready to return home to his wife and family.

Profoundly impressed by his young acquaintance, the rabbi decided to accompany Rabbi Nathan back to Krakow.

On the way, they heard the news. The elderly rabbi of Krakow had passed away, and the city was looking for a new leader. The rabbi of Lublin suggested Rabbi Nathan as a most fitting candidate.

And so it was, at the age of 30, Rabbi Nathan Schapiro, who would one day be known far and wide as the author of the Megaleh Amukot, became the rabbi of the venerable city of Krakow.

*Reprinted from an email of Chabad.org.*

*Editor's Note: The Megaleh Amukot, Reb Natan Nata Spira zt"l's, 387th Yahrzeit is Monday, 13th Menachem Av – August 3rd of this year*



**Y-GRAPHICS**

Shabbat Times - Va'etchanan

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	7:01	8:15	8:52
Tel Aviv	7:16	8:18	
Haifa	7:09	8:19	
Be'er Sheva	7:17	8:17	



**From Reiki to Rabbi**  
By Rabbi David Ashear

Rabbi Yitzchak Fanger from Israel tells the following story about himself.

After finishing his army service in the IDF, he decided to learn Reiki, a Japanese technique for healing. After taking courses and excelling in his new trade, his Reiki teacher urged him to go to the Far East to become a Reiki master.

Fanger obeyed and traveled to India. He pursued more learning and he became heavily involved in Buddhism. Eventually, he became a Buddhist priest and was encouraged to go for an extended stay at a type of monastery up in the mountains to further enhance his career. There, one was forbidden to speak. Their task was to concentrate on meditation and yoga, and to try to achieve Nirvana ('enlightenment').

A few months went by and Yitzchak was becoming antsy. He had an urge to talk, to hear his own voice. So he ran away far from earshot of the retreat. He arrived at a brook and he opened his mouth to speak. The first words that came out of his mouth, after months of silence, were from his Bar-Mitzvah portion that he read from the Torah, 13 years before. He was shocked. Why those words? He had no affiliation with Judaism and no desire for it either. He came back to the monastery and put the incident out of his mind.

A few days later, Yitzchak was ready to go to sleep, but he had an uneasy feeling about sleeping in his room. He decided to pick up his sleeping bag and go sleep outside. As he reached for it, a scorpion jumped out from the part of the bag where his head was supposed to be. He realized then his life was just saved, and there was somebody watching over him.

About a week later, in the evening, after practicing his meditation, the candle in Yitzchak's room went out. He went to search his bag for more candles and found a card with Hebrew print on it. It was then that he remembered; when he was in an airport in Israel, a [Chabad] Chassidic man was passing out cards to people. He told Yitzchak, "Keep it and it will protect you."

He picked up the card and figured he'd meditate on those words instead of the Japanese words that he was used to meditating on. He held up the card and started to read, and it said, "Shma Yisrael HaShem Elokeinu HaShem Echad". (Hear Israel, G-d your G-d is One"). At that moment, Yitzchak had a burst of spiritual enlightenment and decided, enough was enough, he was going back to Israel.

In Israel, Fanger right away began attending lectures on Judaism and became inspired. He started to grow in Jewish knowledge, awareness and lifestyle, until eventually he became fully religious.

To earn a living, he opened up his own Reiki Center in Israel and it caught on fast. Throngs of people were flocking to his center, and he was making an exorbitant amount of money. His mother, who was also his secretary, called him one day and said, "Yitzchak, you are booked for the next two years and you are almost a millionaire!"



A couple of days after that, a religious Jewish woman attended his class. Afterwards she approached him and asked if what he was teaching was Kosher.

Yitzchak was taken aback. He decided to consult with an authoritative rabbi, and was advised to consult with Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein. The rabbi's answer was that what he is doing is based on Avodah Zara ('idol worship') and forbidden to teach.

But this was his whole career, and a highly prosperous one at that. What would he do?

After letting the leading rabbi's words settle on him, he said, "I'm willing to give up everything for you, Ribono shel Olam, just please don't leave me, ever."

Still uncertain what to do, he was told to consult next with Rav Chaim Kanievsky for advice. The Rabbi told him, "Before you decide what you are going to do, go learn Torah in a Yeshiva for three months."

He listened and went to Yeshivat Ohr Sameach. He was so mesmerized by the learning, he decided to stay in Yeshiva. He got married a year later and continued to study Torah full time in yeshivas for nine more years.

Finally, he went back to Rabbi Zilberstein and consulted with him again. He said, "I gave up my career, I gave up Reiki; I studied Torah intensively for ten years. Now I'm ready to start something. What should I do now?"

Rabbi Zilberstein's reply changed Yitzchak Fanger's life forever. He told him about a Holocaust survivor who comes to him every year on a certain day to cry over the losses of his loved ones.

Rabbi Zilberstein asked this man why he chose that particular day each year? The man replied that he had lost his family at the beginning of the war and all he had left was his older brother. He and his brother were forced into doing slave labor every day in a concentration camp.

One night, they had to work until 4:00 am. They were exhausted, but they knew they had to be up for roll call at 5:00 am, or else it would be over for them. He decided he wouldn't go to sleep because it was too risky, but his brother didn't have an ounce of strength left. His brother said, "Please, I'm going to go to sleep, wake me up in 45 minutes."

A short while later, a Nazi grabbed the man and forced him to do a job. He got so caught up with it that he forgot to wake his brother. After roll call, he went to the barracks to find his brother, and found that he was killed. He screamed in anguish, "Why didn't I wake up my brother?" This thought haunts him, and, every year, on his brother's yahrtzeit, he gets emotional and comes to talk to the Rabbi.

Rabbi Zilberstein then looked Yitzchak Fanger in the eye and said, "G-d woke you up and saved your life, but there are still so many of your brothers asleep who don't know anything about Judaism. You have talent; you have charisma. You don't want, Chas v'Shalom, ('G-d forbid') after 120 years for your brothers to ask you why you didn't wake them up. You should dedicate your life to spreading Torah and waking up your sleeping brothers."

Rabbi Fanger took this advice and he has spent years now teaching Torah all over the world. Tens of thousands of people are listening to his classes online. One of those classes has had over 140,000 people listen to it. The Holy One led him in the right direction to fulfill his purpose and he made the right decisions. The few inspired words of encouragement from Rabbi Zilberstein went a long way.

*Reprinted from an email of Emunah Daily.*

The first Passuk of this week's Parshah Va'etchanan, tells us that Moshe cried out to Hashem, and we learn based on the numeric value of the word ואתהנן which is 515, that Moshe prayed 515 separate times to be able to go into the land of Eretz Yisrael. 515 is also the numerical value of the word תפילה - prayer and שירה - song.

Chazzal tell us that, had Moshe cried just one more time, he would have been allowed to enter Yisrael. It is interesting to note that the words צער גידול בנים - the pain of raising children, equals to 515. Just as a person always has to pray and not give up, so too with his children, he or she can never give up on their children, and we must always continue praying for their success.

In all of my years of dealing with Jewish adolescents who, for one reason or another, left the fold, and Torah way of life, and distanced themselves from their Creator, I always found it fascinating why some kids make it back and some unfortunately don't. What I started noticing was, that the parents who stood by their children and always supported them when they needed it most, their children always came back. The ones who were not there for their children, were not as lucky to see such results.

Dearest friends, I can't hold myself back. When we cry for our children, we need to cry for our friends' children also. There are so many people who are suffering real pain in this world. No one has to be a genius to see and hear about all of the young people, who in the last year alone, were trying to numb their pain and whatever they were doing to numb this pain was not working, so they tried harder to numb themselves, and then whether on purpose or not, they took their own life out of the tremendous amount of pain. We need to cry for these souls before they take their own life. We need to beg the Baal HaRachamim to show His Rachmanut on these souls of Klal Yisrael. How dare we sit by the side and say it is not my problem. Dearest friends, it is our problem. These are our children, our friends. It needs to matter to us.

May we merit to a true Nechama and an end to all of our suffering, and that the words of our Haftorah "Nachamu Nachamu Ami" come true with the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days,

So let us join together to 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, and sweet Shabbat.

*Yess*

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

**NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 12**  
**MITZVOT ASEH: 8**  
**MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 4**

**NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 118**  
**NUMBER OF WORDS: 1878**  
**NUMBER OF LETTERS: 7343**

**HAFTORA:**  
Yeshayahu 40:1 - 26 (this is the first of seven Haftorot, [the Seven Haftorot of Consolation] that precede Rosh Hashanah).

The Shabbat after Tisha B'Av, is called Shabbat Nachamu - The Shabbat of consolation or comfort. The Shabbat is called Shabbat Nachamu, for the Haftorah which begins with the words: "Nachamu, Nachamu Ami - Be comforted, be comforted, my people..." In this chapter, the Navi describes the Ultimate Redemption (Moshiach) which we have yet to experience. May it be speedily in our days.

**WEDNESDAY AUG. 5, IS TU B'AV.**

This week we study Chapter 4 (Diaspora and some in Israel study chapter 3) of Pirkei Avot