

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 Miracle of the Yellow Pages Rabbi

By Rabbi Shlomo Schwartz

In the mid-1990's, before cell phones, Facebook, or other social media, I relied on my answering machine and fax machine to conduct business. My phone number was listed in the Yellow Pages, and I'd get fifty to a hundred calls a day that I would screen and call back as my busy schedule would permit. Often, I would ask people to send me a fax with requests or questions. As luck would have it, The Chai Center came up as one of the first Jewish organizations in the Yellow Pages, which was great for business.

One night, I was in my office, an upstairs wood-paneled room that runs the length of the house, lined with my entire library of Hebrew and English books. It was midnight, a cold, rainy winter night, and the phone rang twice before the call went to the answering machine - long enough to hear, short enough to ignore.

A voice started to record: "Hi, there. I got your name from the Yellow Pages, under synagogue....My name is Christina. My grandfather is dying and has been unconscious for ten days; he is on home hospice, and we need a rabbi."

Christina is not the most Jewish sounding name, I thought. This was intriguing enough to answer. I picked up the phone. Christina gave me a rundown again, and I told her I'd be right over.

I went to an unfamiliar neighborhood near Culver City, somewhat downscale and, from its vibe, not exactly little Jerusalem. As I approached the address, I saw an old RV in the driveway. Back then not many Jews took trips in RV's so it made me think this wasn't a very Jewish-identifying family.

As I went inside, I didn't see what I believed to be a single Jewish face except that of the man lying in the hospital bed. "This is my grandfather," one woman said. I saw an old man, unconscious, lying in bed and surrounded by a group of extended family, mostly Latino. It was 1 a.m., and the story began to unfold.

Sam, the elderly man, had worked for the U.S. Postal Service for nearly fifty years and lived in this neighborhood with his non-Jewish wife, Maria, all that time. Maria knew that Sam was Jewish and had asked Christina, the granddaughter, to call for a rabbi for a Jewish burial. The wife said he had cousins in Riverside, and one used to call Sam 'Uncle Shimon.' Good, he had a name!

I then asked what his father's name was. It was David. Perfect: Shimon ben David.

During my nineteen years working as a campus rabbi at UCLA, I also acted as a chaplain at UCLA

Medical Center. I knew that when someone is close to dying, you need to get squarely into the person's face and speak loudly so that he or she can hear you. So, I told Maria and the dozen or so family members, people who may well have never seen a Jew other than Sam in their lives, that I was going to get in Sam's face and speak loudly, because when a person is in a coma or otherwise unconscious, you have to yell. They all nodded with silent approval.

I told them that I was going to call on his Jewish soul with his Hebrew name and chant a special prayer for the soul of Shimon ben David: Sam, son of David.

I moved extremely close to Sam's bed and yelled into his ear the most important one-liner in the Jewish religion: "Shma Yisrael, HaShem Elokenu, HaShem Echad" - "Hear, Israel. G-D is our G-d G-D is One."

Sam, lying in bed with his eyes still closed, said in response, Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam vaed: "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever." They were the first words he had spoken since falling unconscious ten days earlier.

Total silence. I turned around and saw twelve heads leaning over me, listening intently. Suddenly, all the people in the room started yelling, "The rabbi made a miracle; the rabbi made a miracle!"

Finally, Maria thanked me for coming, but asked that I not return. "Rabbi, we'll call you when we need you."

I called every day for several days, and every day someone would answer the phone and quickly end the call. Finally, on the third day, I called, and once again Christina said she would call me and then hung up the phone.

But then, as soon as I hung up, Christina called me back to report that while I had been on the phone with her just moments earlier, Sam had passed away. It felt good to know that Sam died as I was on the phone thinking about him, one soul connected to another.

I was able to convince his wife, Maria, to have a kosher burial for Sam in a Jewish cemetery, telling her that he was born a Jew and should be buried as one. We gathered a minyan to help complete the Jewish funeral ceremony, men who stood up for Sam purely because it was a mitzvah to do so.

Shimon ben David left this world in the highest way.

Reprinted from an email of Kabbalahonline.org.

It Once Happened..

New/Old Security Technology

Transcribed By Mrs. C. R. Benami

from the video of Rabbi Henig telling the story

Four years ago, Rabbi Dov and Sarah Henig, the emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Chengdu, China since 2012, returned there with their three small daughters, from a visit to Israel, where he is from (she is from Brooklyn). The rabbi tells:

After a very long flight and with lots of suitcases in tow, we headed towards the complex where our house is. But the security guards wouldn't let us in. They told us that they need to call the police.

What was the reason? While we were away there were many robberies in the area, so they were sure that during the three weeks we had been out of the country the robbers had also "visited" our house.

The police officers arrived with devices to check fingerprints and walked with us towards our home. We opened the doors with a heavy heart. When burglars break in, they also leave a big mess. We were also worried to see what they took.

We all went inside and thank G-d, everything was in its place, looking exactly as we left it. Nothing was stolen from us; all was well.

Two weeks later I received a phone call from the commanding police officer in the area. He said "Rabbi, please come. I want to meet with you!"

I arrived at the police station and immediately was shown into his office. He says to me, "Remember what happened when you arrived and we told you about the burglars? Well, we caught them! And can you guess what our first question to them was? It was: 'Why didn't you break into the house of the foreigners, the home of the Rabbi?'"

"In reply, the burglars took out their phones and showed us photos of the doorways of your home, and that thing attached on the right side of the doorframe of each of your external entrances (Mezuzot). They said, 'We know how to deal with and control many different security cameras, alarms, remote programs, wireless and WiFi systems, but this is a technology that is completely unknown to us. That's why we took photos of it, so we can investigate it and know how to deal with it in the future.'"

The commander turned to me and asked, "Rabbi, maybe this is special technology from Israel? Perhaps you can bring it here as well!"

Reprinted from an email of Kabbalahonline.org.

Editor's Note: This story was told to me by my father and I thought I really had to share.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Shoftim

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:40	7:53	8:31
Tel Aviv	6:56	7:55	
Haifa	6:48	7:56	
Be'er Sheva	6:57	7:55	



A Powerful Story of A Father's Love

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser

"I will shower pure water upon you and you will become cleansed..." (Yechezkel 36:25)

Rav Schwadron explains the concept of this verse with the following illustration. A father wants to present his son with a special gift, but the son runs away. Disappointed, the father tosses the gift after him.

Like a wayward child who does not appreciate the kindness his father is offering him, says Rav Schwadron, we all - at one time or another - turn away from our Father in Heaven and do not welcome Hashem's intention to purify us. What does Hashem do? He showers us with the purifying water. The establishment of that connection with Hashem results in *וטהרתם* - we ourselves set in motion the purification process and seek to return to Hashem.

A fellow Jew once called me to consult on a pressing parenting issue. The man begged me to make time for him at my earliest opportunity, because the matter was very urgent and needed immediate attention. I agreed to meet with him first thing in the morning.

The man who came into my office the next morning was deeply crushed and heartbroken. He sighed and tearfully began to tell his story.

"I was always very dedicated to my children's upbringing," he said. "I learned with them, paid for the best tutors, did everything possible to ensure that they would grow up to be G-d fearing Jews. But my 17 year old son..." he groaned, and put his face into his hands.

"You know, - with children, you need a lot of mazel (good luck). My son is completely off the path of the Torah. Shabbos means nothing to him. Yom Tov means nothing to him. I don't even know where or with whom he spends his day."

The man went on.

"He comes home late at night, and sleeps till noon. He doesn't talk to us or to his sisters and brothers. I don't think he does anything Jewish at all. My wife and I have no more joy in life," he said. "Even our family occasions are marred - how can we rejoice when our son has nothing to do with Judaism or with us?"

"You know," he continued, "I always wondered why Yaakov Avinu mourned Yosef for 22 years. Why couldn't he accept the situation, and go on with life? Now I don't wonder anymore. I can't make peace with the situation. My own son - my own flesh and blood, whom I raised with such love - is going against everything I live for."

Tears streaming down his face, the man told me that his Rabbi had advised him to speak to me.

"Rav Goldwasser," he cried. "What should I do? What can I tell him? What can I tell my wife and other children?"

I spent a long time with him, offering encouragement and guidance, and mapping out a plan he could follow. I suggested positive steps he could take, things he could say, things he could do. I also told him what not to say and do. He asked me halachic questions, and listened carefully to everything I said.

Finally, the man arose, thanked me, and turned to go. He was at the door when he turned back.

"Can I ask the Rav one more question?" he asked.

"Of course," I said.

"I've been preparing the negel vasser (ritual hand washing) in my house for years," he said. "Every night, I fill the basins and put them at the foot of every bed, and every morning, I spill out the used water. It's my special mitzvah, my special zechus. But lately, when I collect my son's negel vasser, I see that the water isn't used. He isn't washing negel vasser anymore. I feel like a fool preparing it every night - it's just a waste of time. Should I continue preparing the water, or can I just skip it?"

The question hit me for a moment, and then I said, "If you're asking me, I would continue to fill the negel vasser every evening."

I could see that my answer surprised him. He seemed taken aback as he had not expected that answer.

Three weeks later, the man called to let me know what was going on. Things were pretty much the same, he said, and he was getting discouraged. I gave him encouragement, and some new suggestions.

Just before he hung up, he asked, "About the negel vasser - do you think that I still need to bring it to his bed? I feel like such a fool every day." Again, I urged him to continue.

Three weeks later, he called me again. This time, he could barely speak. He seemed to be crying; he was literally choking over his words.

"I listened to you, Rav Goldwasser," he said. "I listened to you! I filled my son's negel vasser every day, and emptied it, even though he wasn't using it." The man paused.

"This morning, I went to his room to collect the basin, and he was wearing his tefillin and praying!"

Overcome with emotion, he paused to catch his breath. Then he said, "I ran to him, and hugged and kissed him. It was the first time in months! I couldn't bring myself to hug him while he was 'gone.' And then I asked him, 'Tell me, my dear child, what made you put on tefillin today?'"

"And my son said, 'I'll tell you, Dad. It was the negel vasser. You knew I wasn't using it and, still, you refilled it every day. I saw that you never lost your faith in me. You made me feel that I shouldn't lose my faith in Hashem, either.'"

During these holy days of Elul, Hashem showers each and every one of us with purifying waters, even those who have become alienated or estranged. It is up to us to take advantage of this exceptional kindness during these auspicious days and to come forward to purify ourselves. *וטהרתם!*

Reprinted from website of Hidabroot.com.

The Passuk in this week's Parshah tells us "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוךך" The Targum Onkelos explains this Passuk as such "You should be complete with Hashem". The Ramban tells us, that this Passuk is teaching us, that when we get nervous about what the future will bring, we have to listen to Hashem, and to no one else. Hashem created and runs everything therefore we should rely on Him.

We have another Passuk later on that tells us "כי תצא למלחמה על איבך וראית טוס ורכב עם רב ממך לא תירא מהם כי ה' אלוךך עמך" - When you go out to war against your enemies, and you see horses and chariots, with more people than you, you shall not be afraid of them, for Hashem is with you. The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh tells us that this is referring to the fight between man and his "יצר הרע" - evil inclination". Man has two things playing against him in this battle, one is that we are not familiar with the tactics of the "יצר הרע" - evil inclination" and secondly when we slip and do the wrong things and we do an offense it has an effect on us, it gives us the desire to do that offense again. How is it possible to win the battle? It is true that if a man tries to fight on his own he will not win as he is not strong enough, but it is because Hashem is with you on your side and fights with you that you will win.

Friends, we are one week into Elul and we are all trying to get closer to our Creator and do the right thing. If we can not do it on our own and Hashem is willing and trying to help us, then we need to be complete with Hashem and listen to what He says, He knows the battle better than any of us, He knows the "יצר הרע" - evil inclination" because He created him, and He knows his tactics. If we would listen to Hashem giving us directions to come back home to Him, our loving Father, we would be so much better off.

So I bless you to reach this level of being with Hashem always, and through that, we will win the battle against our true enemy and come to Rosh Hashanah this year as new people. The best way to reach this level is by praying, so 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 and sweet Shabbat.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 41
MITZVOT ASEH: 14
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 27

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 97
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1523
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5590

HAFTORA:

Yeshayahu 51:12- 52:12 (אנכי אנכי) (this is the fourth of seven Haftorot, [the Seven Haftorot of Consolation] that precede Rosh Hashanah).

This week we study Chapter 1 (Diaspora and some in Israel study chapter 6) of Pirkei Avot

