

# The Jewish Weekly

## It Once Happened...

### FIFTH NIGHT - FIVE WEDDINGS By Rabbi Moshe Chaim Greenwald

My father, Rabbi Abraham Tzvi Greenwald, was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1911. His father died when he was only eight years old, leaving his mother alone with seven young orphans. She sent my father to live with her cousin, Rabbi Menachem Zemba, a famous Talmudic scholar in pre-war Warsaw. Rabbi Zemba raised him devotedly, took responsibility for his education, and even studied with him personally.

On the fourteenth of Kislev, 5689 [1928], Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson married Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the daughter of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson. The "great wedding" in Warsaw was attended by the Chassidic masters and great leaders of Polish Jewry, including Rabbi Zemba.

Rabbi Zemba was quite taken by the Lubavitcher Rebbe's new son-in-law, and wanted to meet with him personally. He arranged to visit the Rebbe at his hotel, taking along my father, who was then 17.

The two scholars had a lively discussion on many issues throughout the Talmud. Rabbi Zemba was very impressed and spoke about their encounter for many years afterwards.

When Rabbi Zemba was ready to leave, the Rebbe suddenly turned to my father and said: "There are only a few days left until Chanukah. Do you know why it is customary in Chassidic shuls to celebrate and make special parties on the fifth night of Chanukah?"

My father was not aware of this custom or its reason, nor was Rabbi Zemba, who looked intently at the Rebbe, waiting for his answer. The Rebbe continued, still addressing my father: "It happens that the fifth day of Chanukah can never occur on a Shabbat. This represents great darkness [such that even the great holiness of Shabbat cannot penetrate]. The fifth candle symbolizes that the light of Chanukah can illuminate even such intense darkness. This is the duty of every Jew, wherever he may find himself, be it in Warsaw, in Moscow or in London, to illuminate even the greatest darkness."

Years passed. The tragedy of the Holocaust hit Polish Jewry. My father went through its horrors, first in the ghetto and then in the death camps. His first wife and five children were killed in front of his eyes. At the end of the war, he was still alive, thank G-d, but broken in body and spirit.

For two years he circulated among the DP camps looking for surviving family members. Alas, all his sisters, brothers and family had been murdered. In 1948 he emigrated and sailed to America, settling in Philadelphia, where his uncle, Moshe Chaim Greenwald (for whom I am named), lived. His uncle, an Amshinover chassid who had moved there before World War I, welcomed him with open arms and tried to rehabilitate him and help him start a new life after his terrible Holocaust trauma.

His uncle and the Amshinover Rebbe pressured my father to meet my mother, who also lived through the war. My mother, a daughter of Reb Zushe Zinkovitz of Cracow, a chassid of the Rebbe of Alexander, had managed to escape with her sister



at the beginning of the war, wandering from country to country until they came to Canada. They were raised by their great-uncle, Reb Koppel Schwartz, a prestigious Jew in Toronto.

My father needed encouragement and confidence for his second marriage, so Reb Koppel traveled with him to New York to receive the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe's blessing. Reb Koppel told the Rebbe that my father was a Holocaust survivor who lost his whole family. The Rebbe's eyes began to tear. He then blessed my father to build a family and live a long life.

Before leaving, my father mentioned that he had attended the Rebbe's daughter's wedding in Warsaw. The Rebbe's eyes lit up, and he said: "Since you were at my son-in-law's wedding, it would be proper to stop in and visit him, too."

Reb Koppel and my father went downstairs to the Rebbe's office. To my father's great surprise, the Rebbe instantly recognized him from his visit almost twenty years before. The Rebbe asked him about Rabbi Zemba's last days. He heard that he had been killed in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, but did not know the details.

After my father related all that he knew, the Rebbe said: "Since my father-in-law, the Rebbe, told you to come visit me, I must tell you a Torah concept. We are now in the month of Kislev, close to Chanukah. It happens that the fifth day of Chanukah can never occur on a Shabbos. This represents a great darkness. The fifth candle thus symbolizes the great light of Chanukah, which can illuminate even such an intense darkness. That is why the joy on this night is so immense. It is the duty of every Jew, wherever he may find himself, be it in New York or Philadelphia or London, to illuminate even the greatest darkness. My father was stunned. The exact same insight came back to him, word for word, as the Rebbe had told it to him 20 years before in the Warsaw hotel.

After getting married, my father served as a teacher and rabbi for the Adath Israel congregation in Washington Heights, New York. My sister and I were born there. When I was five years old, we moved to Toronto where Reb Koppel had found him a position in a Satmar Yeshiva. My younger brother was born there. Although my father's attitudes became close to those of Satmar and he sent us to study in schools and yeshivas close to their approach, he still respected the Rebbe and always spoke of him to us with the highest regard.

Before my marriage in 1968, my father said that although we were not Lubavitch chassidim, he wanted me to receive the Lubavitcher Rebbe's blessing before my wedding, just as he had done before his. It was not easy to schedule an appointment with the Rebbe without waiting for months because of his busy schedule. My father pleaded with the Rebbe's secretariat to allow me in for a blessing, until finally it was agreed to let us in before the wedding, but only for a blessing - no other discussion.

On the designated day, we flew in from Toronto. My father was excited at the prospect of seeing the Rebbe again. There were many people waiting for their turn with the Rebbe that evening, and by the time we entered the Rebbe's room, it was early morning. It was the first time I saw the Rebbe and he made a big impression on me. My father gave the Rebbe a note with my name and my bride's, requesting that we merit to build a Jewish family.

Before even looking at the note, the Rebbe looked up at my father, smiled and said, "It is now more than 20 years since you came here. It's high time, especially since my father-in-law sent you to me."

My father stood shocked, unable to answer. Meanwhile, the secretary was knocking on the door that we should hurry, but the Rebbe motioned with his hand to dismiss the interruption. Opening the letter, he gave us his blessings to build a home, and he also blessed my father with a long, good life. The Rebbe said to my father: "Just as you attended my wedding, so may G-d give you strength to attend your grandchild's wedding."

My father was very moved by this blessing.

Before going out, my father requested to ask the Rebbe a question. "We told the secretary that we would come in just for a blessing, but I would nevertheless like to ask an important question that has been bothering me, should the Rebbe permit me to do so."

The Rebbe smiled and said, "Since the Rebbe sent you to me, I must answer all the questions."

At that point the secretary began knocking on the door again to interrupt, and again the Rebbe motioned us to ignore it.

My father continued: "Living in a Satmar community, I often hear complaints and criticism about Lubavitch. How can you associate with people who are secular, irreligious and against the Torah. How can you put tefillin on with people who are not observant. The verse in Psalms states, 'Whoever hates You, O G-d, I will hate.' My father apologized profusely, saying he didn't mean to criticize, but only to understand himself and in order to be able to explain to others.

The Rebbe answered: "Suppose the daughter of one of your zealous neighbors were to abandon Judaism, G-d forbid. What would he do? Would he try to bring her back to Torah and mitzvot or would he say: 'Whoever hates G-d, I will hate,' sever relations, and never want to see her again?"

The Rebbe continued: "Of course he would say his own daughter is different, as it says, 'do not remain oblivious to the plight of your relatives'. The Rebbe's expression became serious, he banged on the table and said: "In G-d's eyes, every Jew is as dear and precious as an only child. To my father-in-law, every Jew is a relative who cannot be ignored."

*Continued on the other side*



## Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Vayeishev

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:00	5:16	5:53
Tel Aviv	4:14	5:17	
Haifa	4:04	5:15	
Be'er Sheva	4:19	5:19	

# Torah Compilations *With Yossi* Parshat Vayeishev - Chanukah



Where can you find Murphy's Law in the Torah?

The answer is most definitely in Parshat Vayeishev. Murphy's Law states that if something can go wrong it will – and usually at the worst time. That's the story of Yosef in our Parsha.

He starts out as the favorite son of his father, but his brothers hate him for it. They gang up against him and then they sell him into slavery. He is taken down to Egypt and sold into the hands of Potiphar. And there, there is a false accusation made against him, and he is plunged into a dungeon in Egypt – forgotten about – languishing there without any future.

But then there is a twist at the end of the parshah. Suddenly things start to get better. The spell of Murphy's law is broken. Yosef correctly interprets dreams and he is elevated to become none other than second to Pharaoh in Egypt. How can we explain all this?

Rabbi Isaac Bernstein zt'l gave a beautiful insight on Parshat Vayeishev. He said it all depends on the dreams. This is a Parsha that is book-ended by dreams. Two at the beginning and two at the end. At the beginning of the Parsha, Yosef is dreaming about himself: his importance and that others will be prostrating themselves before him. At the end of the parshah however, the dreams are not about Yosef, they are about other people: Pharaoh's ministers, their futures and their welfare. Here, Yosef is not telling the world about himself, he is trying to help others understand themselves. According to Rabbi Bernstein, when your dreams are all about yourself, your ego and your importance – you will be on the way down. But when you see your role as helping others achieve their dreams, you will certainly be on the way up.

This is a lesson I have seen to be so true in terms of leadership. It is natural that every person has an ego. However, when that ego gets in the way of one's responsibility to others when one's entire existence is about promoting oneself – it won't work. You'll find yourself, like Yosef, on the way down. Rather, in positions of leadership, we need to see ourselves as existing for the sake of others. It is a gift from Hashem to help other people to help themselves.

So from Parshat Vayeishev, we learn the important lesson that if you exist for the dreams of others, Murphy's law need not apply.

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 Shabbat, happy Chanukah and Chodesh Tov.

*Yossi*

## The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 112  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1558  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5972

This year 5781/2020, we take out two Sifrei Torah; in the first Sefer Torah we have seven Aliyot in the weekly Parsha (Vayeishev).

We place the second Sefer Torah next to the first and a Half-Kaddish is said. We then lift and roll the first Sefer Torah.

The Maftir is read in the second Sefer Torah from Parshat Nasso (7:18-7:23) from "ונביאם השני" until "ונביאם השני";

HAFTORA:  
Zechariah 2:14-4:7

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Tevet  
Rosh Chodesh - Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2020.

My father hurried to Rabbi Gluck's house. When he came in, he saw a girl sitting in the living room crying profusely. Rabbi Gluck had located the girl, and she wanted to return with them to Toronto.

As my father looked around the room, his eyes fell on the kindled Menorah. It had five burning candles. He felt faint as he recalled the Rebbe's words to him from 50 years ago, and from 30 years ago and from 10 years ago:

"The fifth candle symbolizes the strength of the menorah light...the role of every Jew is to light up the darkest place, in Warsaw or London, ...in New York or London, ...in Toronto or London.... If his daughter were to stray from Judaism, ...for G-d, every Jew is an only child, ...for my father-in-law every Jew is a relative who cannot be ignored."

The girl returned to her family and to Judaism. Needless to say, from that day on this "zealous neighbor" stopped speaking against Lubavitch.

When my father returned to Canada he felt a strong desire to see the Rebbe again. But by this time it was even more difficult to get a private audience with the Rebbe. It wasn't until the following Tishrei, in 1980, my father succeeded in joining a group "audience" with the Rebbe, along with all the guests who had come to the Rebbe for the holidays.

When his turn came to pass by the Rebbe, he could not speak and burst out crying from great emotion. Finally he briefly told him the story. The Rebbe commented: "My father-in-law had great foresight."

Every time my father retold this story, he would marvel over the wondrous miracle of the Rebbe. Fifty years ago when he was a bridegroom, the Rebbe saw what would happen 50 years later. But even more, he could not get over the modesty of the Rebbe, who attributed everything to his father-in-law's foresight.

The chain of miracles did not end there.

My father passed away on the 14th day of Kislev 1988, following the celebration week of my eldest daughter's marriage. Thus was fulfilled the Rebbe's blessing: that he would rejoice at the wedding of his grandchild. It was exactly 60 years to the day since the Rebbe's wedding in Warsaw.

*Reprinted from an email of Kfar Chabad Magazine.*



*Continued from previous page*

The Rebbe then looked at me and my father penetratingly and said: "We will conclude with a blessing. It is known that all chassidim celebrate the 5th night of Chanukah. The reason is because the fifth day of Chanukah can never occur on a Shabbos. This represents a great darkness. The fifth candle thus symbolizes the great light of Chanukah, which can illuminate even such an intense darkness. This is the duty of every Jew, wherever he may find himself, be it in New York or Toronto or London. Every Jew is a part of G-d above, His only child. When you illuminate his soul, then even the farthest Jew, in the darkest place, can be awakened."

My father was so taken aback and shocked to hear these words again, that he didn't hear the rest of the blessing of the Rebbe. He didn't even remember leaving the Rebbe's room. All the way back to Toronto he kept muttering to himself: "Amazing; most amazing."

Ten years passed. In 1978 my younger brother got engaged to a girl from London. Just minutes before leaving our house to fly there for the wedding, our neighbor, a highly respected member of the Satmar community, came in and asked to speak privately with my father. He confided to him that his daughter had forsaken Judaism and burst into tears. He and his wife didn't know much about it in the beginning, as she hid it from them. But two weeks ago, to their great embarrassment and dismay, she ran off with a non-Jewish boyfriend and fled to London. All their efforts to locate her were unsuccessful. He asked my father, since he was going to London, to try to find his daughter and save her. My father who was a close friend of this neighbor was terribly shaken by this story. I was also distraught and began thinking about what we could possibly do about this situation in London.

My brother's wedding was a joyful celebration. On the first night of sheva brachot, the week of festive meals, my father told his new relative the story, and asked his advice. The bride's father told my father that he himself had no idea what to do, but he recommended a Lubavitch friend, Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Gluck, who had accomplished many missions for the Lubavitcher Rebbe and had helped many lost souls throughout Europe find their way back.

They immediately called him. Rabbi Gluck promised to do all he could. He called the girl's parents in Toronto for any particles of information and clues on how to locate the girl.

My parents remained in London for twelve days. One day during Chanukah, Rabbi Gluck called. "Come quickly. I have a nice surprise for you."



To subscribe to THE JEWISH WEEKLY or to dedicate a single issue, please contact us by email: [editor@thejewishweekly.org](mailto:editor@thejewishweekly.org) or [www.thejewishweekly.org](http://www.thejewishweekly.org)