

The Jewish Weekly

Earned a miracle by forgiving

By Rabbi Elimelech Biederman

Last year, Lag b'Omer, in the peak of the Corona epidemic, there was a wedding in Yerushalayim that wasn't following the health department's guidelines. Police officers came into the hall, arrested the Chattan and the Kallah, and brought them to the police station. Whoever passed them in the police station couldn't resist staring at this unusual sight: A Chattan and Kallah, still dressed in the wedding suit and wedding gown, were being detained by the police. They were there until 3:30 in the morning. The happiest day of their life became a traumatic nightmare.

The young, new couple took it very hard. This wasn't how they planned to start their new life together. In particular, the Kallah was very upset. For weeks and months after the wedding, she cried over what happened.

They wondered, "Who called the police? Who tattled on them?" They didn't know. But one thing they were sure of: Whoever it was, they would never forgive him.

Eventually, they found out who called the police. It was actually a very good bachur from a good home. He didn't have any bad intentions. It was just that he was worried that many people might die because of this wedding.

The bachur called the father of the Kallah on erev Rosh Chodesh Elul to ask mechilah (forgiveness). He said, "I was the one who called the police."

The father didn't know how to respond. This phone call took him by surprise. The bachur continued, "I regret what I did. I didn't call the police to be cruel, Chas v'Shalom (Heaven forbid). It resulted from the fear and panic that reigned in those early days of the Covid 19 virus. I saw the dancing, people holding hands, and I imagined the repercussions this might cause. I wanted the police to tell people to stop dancing, so no one gets ill. I didn't imagine they would arrest the Chattan and Kallah."

The father of the Kallah replied, "You turned the wedding into a funeral. How can I forgive you?"

The bachur said, "I understand that you are angry at me. But please listen to my plea. Before your daughter's wedding, I used to get many shidduch offers. I am from the best bachurim in a very good yeshiva, and I was considered a good catch. But ever since that episode, shadchanim stopped calling. It is like I was cursed. I'm certain that I'm being punished for this Aveirah (sin), and I beg forgiveness."

The Kallah's father repeated that he didn't forgive him.

Still on the phone, the bachur cried uncontrollably. This roused the father's compassion. He said, "I want to forgive you, but I just can't. Call me tomorrow, this time I need time to think things over."

The next day when the bachur called, the Kallah's father said, "I was awake all night, studying the words of Chazal, אין אדם נוקף, אצבעו למטה אלא אם כן מכריסין עליו מלמעלה, 'A person doesn't even stub his toe [in this world] unless it was decreed from Above.' I studied this lesson from the Mesilat Yesharim and the Shaarei Teshuvah. I attained awareness that everything happens from Heaven, and what occurred was destined to happen. If you hadn't called the police, someone else would have. It was destined from heaven that we had to go through this. Therefore, I forgive you. However, you still have to ask mechilah (forgiveness) from the Chattan and Kallah..."

The bachur called the Chattan and he begged for his forgiveness. The Chattan didn't want to forgive him. He said, "There are some things that are impossible to forgive." The bachur cried copiously and bitterly. The Chattan realized that he genuinely regretted what he did, and he said, "I forgive you. But now you have to ask forgiveness from the Kallah, and I don't think she will forgive you."

The bachur spoke to the Kallah. He explained that he was the one who called the police, why he did so, the punishment he received (that shadchanim stopped calling), and his deep remorse. She replied, "How dare you ask me for forgiveness?" and hung up the phone.

It Once Happened...

Devastated, the bachur spoke to a rav he was close to, and he explained to the rav that without the Kallah's forgiveness, he was afraid he might never get married. He is being punished for what he did. The rav knew the Kallah's father, so together (the rav and the father) went to the Kallah, to request forgiveness for the bachur.

She replied, "I can't forgive him. Never!"

The rav told her that the Zohar in parashat Mikeitz states that when one forgives his fellow man, even when it is hard for him, merits miracles. The rav told her that it is worthwhile for her to forgive. It will give her credit to earn miracles when she needs them. She was persuaded, and with tears in her eyes, she said that she forgives the bachur.

A month later, on erev Rosh Hashanah, the Chattan and Kallah got into a terrible accident. Their car flipped over seven times, and it was crushed like butter, but they emerged unscathed. Magen David Adom and Hatzalah volunteers at the site searched the car to see who was still inside, but the young couple told them there is nothing to look for. They were the only passengers, and they are healthy and well. They asked, "How did you manage to get out of the car?" It seemed impossible. The car was crushed. They replied that the window on the roof was open, and miraculously they both flew out from there. It was like a vacuum had pulled them out of the rooftop.

They were brought to the hospital just to be certain that everything was well. The hospital staff didn't even find a scratch or a drop of blood. The hospital staff told them, "You are very fortunate to have experienced this miracle."

The Kallah told them, "We also don't know how and why this occurred. But we forgave our fellow man, and as our sages say, this attitude gives us the merit for miracles."

Reprinted from an email of Torah Wellsprings.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Vayigash

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:06	5:22	6:00
Tel Aviv	4:20	5:24	
Haifa	4:10	5:21	
Be'er Sheva	4:25	5:26	



Seventy-Fours

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Towards the end of his life, in 1850, Rebbe Moshe of Lelov traveled to the Holy Land, arriving shortly after the Sukkot festival that year. He said that if he prays at the Kotel HaMaravi (Western Wall) [and blows the shofar there], it will hasten the Ingathering of the Exiles and the Coming of Moshiach.

Before he began his journey, he went to take leave from several of the major Chassidic leaders of his generation. When he came to Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin, the Rebbe said, "Wait for me. I want to go with you."

R. Moshe pointed to his white beard, implying that he was getting older and didn't have time to wait.

His plan was to travel with a group of ten people. He put away money for this cause, but whenever he had enough money he ended up giving it to tzedakah, and then he would have to start saving money for the trip again.

Once, a childless woman came to Rebbe Moshe, and requested a blessing for children. He told her that if she gives him a certain large amount of money (the amount he needed for his trip) she would have a child. She was ready to give the money, but R. Moshe told her that she must ask permission from her husband first. Her husband was a chassid of Rabbi David Zvi Hersz Taub, "the Gitte Yid" Tzadik of Neustadt, and he asked his Rebbe whether to give the money.

The Rebbe replied, "You should give the money. However, since you need a miracle to bear a child, I recommend that you tell Rebbe Moshe of Lelov that you will only give the money if the Rebbe promises that the child will live long. Because when a child is born with a miracle, he often doesn't live long."

When she returned with the money, she stipulated the condition. Rebbe Moshe Lelov replied, "The years of your child's life will be as many as the days I live in Eretz Yisrael." R. Moshe lived seventy-four days in Israel, and the child lived for seventy-four years.

When Rebbe Moshe was on the boat, he kept repeating, "yom leshanah - a day for a year."

People didn't understand his intention. Later they realized that he was praying to live one day for each year of his life. He was seventy-four years old then, and he lived in The Holy Land a corresponding seventy-four days.

Many wondrous stories are told about his voyage. One is, that there was a hole in the boat and water began to seep in! Rebbe Moshe placed a cloth over the hole, and this miraculously stopped the influx of water. (This cloth is still extant, and is used as a bedecken tichel (wedding veil) by the kallahs (brides) of his descendants.)

Rebbe Moshe took with him his son Rav Eliezer Menachem Mendel (Rav Luzer Mendel), and his six-year-old grandson David Tzvi Shlomo (Reb Dovid'l). The ship docked in the northern port of Acco. Rebbe Moshe travelled [by donkey!] to visit the tzaddikim who lived in Tsfat and Teveriya ('Safed' & 'Tiberias') and other holy burial sites in the area before going up to Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), because he said that after he gets to Yerushalayim, he will not want to leave.

When he finally came to the Old City of Jerusalem, he was ill. His children debated whether they should bring him to the Kotel in this condition. They decided that since his primary purpose for coming to Israel was to go to the Kotel to hasten bringing Moshiach, they should. But as they were bringing him towards the Kotel, Arabs blocked their way and threw rocks at them until it was impossible to continue. The family and the chassidim who accompanied them sadly returned to their rented lodgings.

Unfortunately, he never reached the Kotel. Broken hearted, feeling that the window of opportunity for Redemption had now been slammed shut, he became extremely ill and passed away three days later. On the seventy-fourth day of his arrival to the Holy Land, on the thirteenth of the Jewish month of Tevet, his soul departed from its bodily restraints.

He promised amazing things about his yahrtzeit. He said that the date of his demise is propitious for rain, and therefore even in a year that is lacking rain, it is unnecessary to proclaim a fast day to pray intensely for rain before his yahrtzeit passes. Rav Shmuel Salant, the chief rabbi of Jerusalem heeded his words, and for the next half century, until his own passing, refused to decree a fast day for rains until the thirteenth of Tevet passed.

R. Moshe also said that those who will dedicate a meal on his yahrtzeit in his honor (even if it is just cake and l'chaim,) will have a salvation for whatever they need.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

Editor's Note: Rabbi Moshe Biederman of Lelov ז"ל's 170th Yahrtzeit is Monday, 13th Tevet – December 28th of this year

If you were building a new town or city, what is the first structure that you would put up? You might be thinking, that my answer would be a synagogue, but it is not. We learn the answer from Parashat Vayigash.

A beautiful commentary I heard from the Chief Rabbi of England and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, is that Yaakov and his family, seventy souls in all, are on their way to Egypt, where Yaakov will be reunited with his son Yosef, whom he had not seen for twenty two long years. The Torah tells us, "ואת יהודה שלח לפניו אל יוסף להורית לפניו גשנה" – Yaakov sent Yehuda, ahead of the family, to Yosef, to show Yaakov the way to Goshen."

This does not seem to make sense, because if Yehuda was going to show Yaakov the way, he would surely need to be alongside him? If he is a few days journey ahead, how is he going to show him the way?

So the Midrash in Bereishit Rabba, as brought down by Rashi says, "לתקן לו בית-תלמוד, שמשם תצא הוראה" – Yaakov asked Yehuda to open a school, so that education should flow from it."

The term 'להורית' means 'to show the way' but it also means 'to teach'. Yaakov wanted to guarantee, that on the very first day on which the family arrived in Goshen, the children would have a school to go to.

He knew that they would be arriving into an alien Egyptian environment, that in the course of time, the people would integrate into Egyptian society, but that it would always be crucially important, for them to retain their own independent identity. It was important for them to be rooted in their own faith, to be loyal to their own traditions, and to remember how central the land of Israel should always be in their lives.

The way to achieve all of this, was through solid and comprehensive education.

Yesterday, Friday, December 25th of this year, we fasted the fast of Asara B'Tevet. A fast that records the beginning of all those tragedies, which led eventually, to the destruction of our Temple. In anticipation of that tragedy, Raban Yochanan Ben Zakkai famously met up with Vespasian, the Roman Governor, and he asked him, "תן לי יבנה והכמיה" – Please guarantee that even as Jerusalem is destroyed, the Jewish people will have a school in Yavneh, in order to learn about their tradition. In the absence of Jewish education, there can be no Jewish future.

Every key term relating to the books that we learn, and those who teach them, all mean one thing – learning Torah. It is from that same word 'הוראה' which means 'to study'. 'משנה' means 'to learn'. 'תלמוד' means 'to learn' and 'גמרה' is the Aramic for 'learning'. A 'teacher' is 'מורה' and a 'parent' is 'הורה'. Everything is centered on the importance of learning.

With this in mind, the name that we give to our houses of prayer, is 'Shul', coming from the German, meaning 'school'. It is a place where we daven to Hashem, and a place that we congregate socially. But primarily it needs to be a 'shul' – 'a school' – a place of learning.

All those years ago, Yaakov Avinu taught us a crucial lesson for Jewish survival – successful Jewish communities, are those which establish successful institutes for Jewish education.

So may we continue to learn, and 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.

Yossi

ריגוש

Sponsored in loving memory of
חיה ברכה בת ר' נפתלי משה
Mena Rabinowitz ob"m
Who's Yahrzeit was
ה'טבת

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 106
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1480
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5680

HAFTORA:
Yechezkel 37:15 - 28