

The Jewish Weekly

Angels in Action in Netanya

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

When we were children, our family used to go on a big vacation holiday once a year. Since our family did not have a car, my father hired a minivan for the trip. In order to save unnecessary expenses, we prepared all the food for the journey, and my father told us what the itinerary would be, as well as what the budget of the trip was. One reason he did this was so that we wouldn't ask him in the middle of the trip for all sorts of extras that he hadn't budgeted for. My parents were not miserly, but they were responsible and planned financial matters carefully. They simply didn't like squandering money, but they made sure we had everything we needed.

My parents are very special, good people who give us their heart and soul, and gave us everything we needed - not necessarily everything we wanted, but everything we needed and which they thought was good for us, even if we might have disagreed and, at the time, not liked them for it!

So anyway, we set off on the trip, headed for Tiverya [Tiberias] and the Kinneret Lake ["Sea of Galilee"] where we planned on going on a boat trip. On the way, we stopped off, as planned, at Netanya, so that we could take a break and eat next to the sea. When we were close to the promenade, one of my brothers needed to go to the toilet. My father started to drive around looking for a place.

There were many restaurants, but my father was looking for a kosher one. We didn't understand why, so he explained that if we'd enter a non-kosher restaurant it would be a chilul Hashem [disgrace for G-d] when people would see chareidi Jews going into it - they might think we were going inside to eat.

When my father found a kosher restaurant, he parked and went inside with my brother. As they entered, a waitress asked my father how many they were, assuming they were coming to eat. My father replied, "My son just needs a toilet."

She hesitated a bit, and then said, "Ok, fine."

They entered, my father waited in the restaurant. After two minutes, just as my brother came out of the bathroom, the head waiter saw this and understood immediately that they hadn't entered the restaurant to eat.

He began to scream, "This is a restaurant, not a public toilet! Who gave you permission to enter?!"

My father and brother didn't answer, and the head waiter continued to scream, "You are religious people! How can you allow yourselves to use a toilet without permission?!"

My father was now in a big mess. On the one hand, he could have just said, "Mister, you're making a mistake. I entered with permission from the waitress by the door."

However, he knew that if he would say this, he would cause her harm. After all, she had helped him. It would be a lack of appreciation.

From the corner of his eye, he could see she was afraid of what would happen next. On the other hand, what was happening right then was a chillul Hashem. The waiters and also all the diners who had heard the screams might think that he had really used the bathroom without permission.

So how could he get out of this predicament without harming the waitress who let them in?

My father was a student of Rav Avraham Ganichovski; he learned with him in Slobodka Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. R' Ganichovski was a wise man with a noble soul. He would always say, "Every problem can be solved 90% with intellect, and if not, one can add another 10% of good character traits."

So then my father thought about what R' Ganichovski would do, and within a few seconds he had an idea.

"My dear sir," he began, "a pity you're angry at us for nothing. We are planning to eat here. And not only the two of us; all of my family are just about to enter."

(My father didn't lie. He didn't say we had planned to eat there, but that we are planning.)

The head waiter quickly apologized, "Oh, sorry, I apologize. Please understand. There are people who enter without permission just to use the toilets, and I thought by mistake..."

"That's fine," my father said, "don't worry about it. Just tell us where to sit."

"How many are you?" he asked

"Nine" my father replied, and with that he sent my brother to run to the minivan and tell everyone to come into the restaurant.

"Come," my brother said, "We're going to eat in the restaurant!"

"What?! A restaurant? How?" we all asked. It wasn't on the plan, AND, we had never eaten in a restaurant, not ever! My brother quickly explained to them what happened, and everyone hurried into the restaurant.

Already as we were going in, we were talking about whether it would be at the expense of the other activities of the trip - it wasn't planned, which means it wasn't on the budget! And if so, would it be at the expense of the boat trip or the jeeps? We knew that my father always kept to the budget.

On the other hand, eating in a restaurant was a novel and exciting "activity." We entered the restaurant and found the waiters joining together tables.

Everyone sat down and tried to behave in a dignified way, not to speak loudly, etc. Then a waiter came and asked us what we wanted to order.

Not used to eating in a restaurant, my father wasn't sure, so the waiter showed him the menus, and the sorts of things they could order.

After the initial shock of seeing the prices, my parents began to order dishes that would satisfy everyone.

It really was an exciting activity for us! We felt like kings, with special dishes and drinks. The little kids even did their best to eat nicely (without using their hands). Just seeing my parents, who are so careful with how they spend their money, sitting in a restaurant was an experience in itself!

Then, toward the end of the meal, we suddenly noticed all the waiters including the head waiter, and someone else who appeared to be the manager of the restaurant, coming out of the kitchen in a line, and each one was carrying a dessert - cakes and ice cream! - with sparklers on them. It was very showy and we looked around to see to which important diner they were going. But they came to our table!

It Once Happened...

They surrounded it, and then in a rehearsed movement, put down all the desserts on our table!

"What's this?" my father said. "I think there's been a mistake. We didn't order dessert."

"That's fine," said the manager, "You indeed didn't order it, and you don't need to pay for it. This is a gift from the restaurant's staff, to you and your special family."

He then sat down next to my father, while the rest of the waiters remained standing.

"Listen," he said. "After you began eating, one of my waiters noticed that the waitress who greets people by the door was crying. He said that he went to her and asked what happened, but she didn't want to answer, but when he pressed her, she said nervously what had happened, and that she had given you permission to enter the toilets, and so on. She said that when the head waiter started to scream, she was sure that you would say you had got permission from her and she would end up losing her job. She was already thinking where else she could work!"

Then to her shock, she saw that you had decided to eat in the restaurant with all your family, just so she wouldn't be harmed. Then," related the manager, "she started to cry again! This time, she explained that, in all her life she's never seen anyone behave like this, and with such consideration for others. No one had ever done anything like that for her, nor had she ever heard of anyone doing such a thing for anybody else."

"So as you were eating," said the manager, "everyone here in the kitchen was very inspired and impressed by what happened. So this is our gift to you, with all our heart. We all think you are a special unique family. And your children can be proud to have such a father."

Then the waitress came and thanked my father.


So then we finished eating and they came with the bill. My father opened the holder and saw there was...no bill. Instead there was a card on which was written that next time we would eat there, we would receive 50% off.

My father called the manager and thanked him for the discount for the future occasion, and then quickly asked, "But what about the bill for this time?"

The manager said, "You don't need to pay. It's free. Our policy in this restaurant is not to take money from angels!"

We left the restaurant and continued on our trip to Tiverya, and were able to do all the activities that had been planned. But we knew that the "activity" that we had at the restaurant was unique and we would not experience anything like it again. I'm not talking about the food, though of course it was very tasty, but that my father, with his wisdom and good character, was able to think about someone else, even someone he had no relationship with. He showed appreciation to her, for her helping his son.

Reprinted from KabbalaOnline.org.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Chayei Sarah

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	5:17	6:29	7:09
Tel Aviv	5:31	6:30	
Haifa	5:21	6:29	
Be'er Sheva	5:35	6:32	

Full Repayment

By Asharon Baltazar

It was a joyous day in the Ukrainian city of Mohyliv, where the Jewish community was inaugurating the new women's mikvah. Times were difficult and the fact that they had scraped together the funds to build a spacious and welcoming mikvah was certainly cause for celebration.

The atmosphere was jubilant at the crowded reception, especially among the women, who treasured the mitzvah of mikvah and looked forward to using the new facility. The rebbetzin and the butcher's wife found themselves sitting together; both women shared a common sorrow, they were childless. A well-wisher came over and wholeheartedly blessed them that they should merit to have children.

The rebbetzin was so moved that she declared to the butcher's wife, "If we merit, with G-d's blessing, to have children, you a girl and I a boy, or vice versa, let's marry them off. What a fine shidduch that will be!"

When the rabbi heard that his unborn offspring had been promised to the butcher and his wife, he was none too pleased. But time passed, and the entire episode was all but forgotten.

Years passed and the rabbi of Mohyliv was looking for a suitable young man for his daughter. He traveled from one yeshiva to another, searching for a young man who was learned, sensitive, G-d-fearing, and from fine, respectable stock. In one yeshiva, he met the son of the rabbi of Kyiv, who impressed him, and the engagement was soon announced.

During the engagement period, the groom was invited for an extended stay in Mohyliv, his wife's hometown. The excited groom was warmly welcomed. As the visit wore on, a sense of unexplained anxiety seemed to overcome him. His change of mood could be traced to a certain house on the way from the bride's home to the synagogue. Whenever he walked by, a woman would stand at the window and stare him down. At times, he even noticed her weeping.

His curiosity got the better of him and one day he approached her and asked her to explain her tears. "It is my personal story and does not have anything to do with you," she said with saddened eyes. The groom gently pressed her, and at last, she acquiesced.

As she told the story, the groom became pale and asked to be allowed into the house to sit down. A long while passed, and he struggled to regain his composure. Finally, he went back to the home of his future in-laws. It was from that moment on that the unexplained anxiety was apparent in the young groom.

The date of the wedding arrived. Excitement filled the air. The rabbi of Mohyliv and the rabbi of Kyiv were escorting the groom to the chuppah. Friends and relatives had gathered from the entire region to celebrate this important occasion with their venerable leaders.

Before the ceremony began, the groom asked to say a few words. The surprised crowd listened in silence.

He began by confiding how he had noticed a woman crying every time he walked past, and then revealed what she had told him on that fateful day. The woman, the butcher's wife, told him what had happened some two decades prior, on the day of the mikvah inauguration, when she and the rebbetzin had given their word that if blessed with children, they would marry them to one another.

"The rebbetzin had a girl, and I had a boy," the butcher's wife explained, "but my dreams for my son's future were short-lived. My domestic helper took my baby in a wooden tub to the river together with the laundry. As she was working, a wave swept away the tub with the baby inside. The tragedy was so awful, we never recovered.

"Now, when I see you walking by, I remember my lost child, who, according to the plan, was supposed to marry the rabbi's daughter."

This part of the story was well known to the townspeople, and they understood the heartache of the butcher's wife. However, what followed is what shocked the crowd.

The groom continued: "I asked the woman if she still had any of the kerchiefs she had used to saddle her son. When she replied in the affirmative, it was my turn to be shocked.

"I must reveal a family secret: I am not the biological son of the rabbi and rebbetzin of Kyiv. They were childless and adopted me after someone found me on the Dniester river bank, next to one of the Jewish neighborhoods. My adoptive parents only had one sign that would identify me—the cloth I was wrapped in."

"When the butcher's wife showed me the cloth she had wrapped her baby in, I recognized that I was standing before my biological mother. I am now about to be married, and my birth parents are sitting home and mourning!" the groom concluded.

The emotion that washed over the crowd is nearly impossible to describe. All the guests escorted the groom to his parents' house. The rabbi embraced the butcher, as the rebbetzin hugged the butcher's wife. Twenty years after they had made up to marry their children, they set off to the chuppah, all three sets of parents together. The joy that pervaded Mohyliv that night, was never [again] matched.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.



Avraham wanted his servant, Eliezer, to go find a wife for his son, Yitzchak. He told Eliezer to go to the town where his family lived in Charan and find a wife from within the family. Eliezer, not knowing how to find this girl, he went to the well. Eliezer saw a woman named Rivka. Eliezer ran towards her and asked her for a drink. She quickly gave him and the Torah tells us "When she finished giving him to drink, she said, 'I will draw water even for your camels until they have finished drinking.' And it was, when the camels had finished drinking, the man took a golden nose ring, its weight was a beka, and two bracelets and put them on her arms..."

There is a very significant difference in the way Rivka gave water to Eliezer and how she gave water to his camels. This difference teaches us a concept regarding doing acts of kindness.

When Rivka gave water to Eliezer, it was she who decided when to stop giving him water. When she felt that he had enough water, she then "finished giving him to drink." However, when Rivka gave water to his camels, she only stopped giving them water "when the camels were finished drinking."

When we do an act of kindness for someone, we're usually the ones who choose just how much time to spend doing this Chessed. This is because if someone does a kind gesture, he or she usually controls how much time and effort to put in to it.

However, if you allow the recipient of the act of kindness to tell you when you've done enough, then that's an entirely different experience altogether.

For example, let's assume you have a friend that's emotionally very needy and sometimes requires a lot of attention. Listening to this person talk endlessly might be absolutely the right thing to do. But since he's usually never the one to end the conversation, you'll usually engage him until you've "finished giving him drink" and then gently end the conversation. This is how Rivka was toward Eliezer and it's a beautiful act of kindness.

However, if once in awhile you listened to and spent time with this person until he ended the conversation and "had finished drinking," it would be an even greater act similar to what Rivka did for the camels.

When doing an act of kindness we often feel a sense of entitlement that tells us that we can stop our generosity when we decide to do so. It goes against our nature to give until the receiver says to stop. But sometimes this is exactly what Hashem wants us to shoot for.

So let's show our kindness 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

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

Although none of the 613 mitzvot are counted from Chayei Sarah, we learn about burial of the dead, and funeral practices such as eulogizing the dead. We also find lessons relating to marriage in this Parshah.

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 105
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1402
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5314

HAFTORA: Melachim I 1:1-31

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Kislev
Rosh Chodesh - Friday, Nov. 17, 2020

חיי שרה
מרת

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