

# The Jewish Weekly

## For Generations To Come

By Mrs. Zlata (Freiman) Hertzell

In 1973, just before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, I had travelled from Israel to New York to attend my brother's wedding, and while there, I came to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Before the audience was to take place, Rabbi Leibel Groner, the Rebbe's secretary, instructed me to write down my requests on a piece of paper which would be handed into the Rebbe in advance. I did as he instructed – I wrote that I was married with children, that I was teaching in the Chabad school in Lod, and that my children were in daycare which was costing more than the money I was making. I wanted the Rebbe's advice – should I leave my job and stay home with my kids, instead of borrowing every month to make ends meet?

When I walked into the Rebbe's office, he had a big pile of letters on his desk, he reached into it to extract my letter – he pulled it out without even looking for it. He read it quickly and then answered my question with this statement:

"I see you are teaching the children of Israel at the school Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchak, which is named after my holy father-in-law," he began. "You should know that the education of Jewish children is a conduit for blessing – both material and spiritual – for you and your family for generations to come."

Then he repeated those words again, and I felt that the audience was over.

It was only after I left that the Rebbe's words started sinking in. I thought: "The Rebbe is telling me that my job educating children is a conduit for blessings. So clearly, there is only one thing I can do – keep working." I called my husband, Meir, and after I told him what the Rebbe said, he concurred with my decision.

Before I could return to Israel, however, the Yom Kippur War broke out and the news we were hearing was not good.

My husband was drafted into a combat unit on a moment's notice and, because I was still in New York, he distributed our children amongst our neighbors and relatives. I was informed that he was sent to the front lines at Ismailia, Egypt but that's all I knew. I immediately asked Rabbi Groner for another audience with the Rebbe, but he could not schedule it as I had just been to see the Rebbe a few days before. However, after I broke down in tears, he suggested that I wait outside the office and ask for a blessing for my husband when the Rebbe came out.

My heart was pounding, but I mustered the courage to approach the Rebbe as he passed by and make my plea. The Rebbe responded, "When you return to the Holy Land, you will find that all your loved ones are healthy and whole. Be sure to keep in touch and let me know the good news. You can call me collect."

He said this three times – once in English, once in Yiddish and once in Hebrew – and I knew his words would come true. I was trembling with

excitement because I was sure it was going to happen exactly as he said. And indeed it did.

I had a hard time getting a plane ticket back to Israel because all the flights were commandeered for returning soldiers, doctors and other essential personnel. But I begged the airline – telling them that my husband was in combat and I had no idea where my children were – and so they let me on the plane, even though I would have to sit on the floor.

Once I was on the plane, a soldier gave up his seat for me, and I told all the other passengers what the Rebbe had said. I believe they were greatly encouraged by his words. Even people who were not religious. All the men present put on their yarmulkes – those who didn't have them covered their heads with napkins – and the plane turned into one praying synagogue. It was very amazing and moving to see.

At some point during our flight, the plane started zig-zagging in the sky because we had encountered a dogfight between our planes and Egyptian planes. I was so scared that I burst out crying when this was happening, but one of the soldiers said to me, "Why are you crying? Your Rebbe told you that everything would turn out all right for you and your loved ones." And that reminder calmed me down.

When we landed, the airport was dark, and there was no public transportation of any kind – everything had been turned over to the war effort. But I managed to make my way home, and I located my children.

The war lasted close to three weeks. When the dust settled, though many Israeli soldiers had been killed and injured, my husband came home safe and sound just as the Rebbe said he would. As the Rebbe had requested, I made sure to call New York to report that all was well with my family.

After the war, I returned to work, and I kept on working. I have now been a teacher in the system for thirty-five years. I never wanted to block the conduit that was bringing blessings to me and my family. Yes, there were financial difficulties at the beginning, but after a time, my salary increased and I no longer needed to borrow money to send my children to daycare. I saw the blessings increase from year to year. I saw my children growing up, being educated, becoming successful in marriage, in raising their own children. I saw the Rebbe's blessing in action from generation to generation.

Today I would say to anyone involved in Jewish education: "It's a huge thing that you are doing; it's the most important thing in the world. Our children are our most valuable treasure, they are in your hands."

For this reason, I never retired. People say to me, "What? At your age, you are still working? How do you have the energy for this?" And I answer, "I do it for the blessing and for the happiness it brings me."

Today, I live in Upper Nazareth (Nazareth Illit) where I am the principal of a girls' high school. The girls are bussed in from the entire region, and they are so pleased to come, so pleased with the school – the good education, the good teachers, the good atmosphere. Our school even won a regional prize for excellence. And I really see the Rebbe's blessing all around me, still flowing after more than forty years.

*Reprinted from my encounter with the Rebbe, www.myencounterblog.com.*

## It Once Happened...

### A REAL JEWISH MOTHER

By Rabbi Binyamin Eidelman

A renowned personage of the old Jewish settlement in Jerusalem was the holy R' Dovid Biederman, a scion of Rabbinic and Chassidic lineage. He was known as a Tzaddik among Tzaddikim. His only concern in life was whether or not he was living up to the expectations of his Creator.

Once, R' Dovid decided to undertake the arduous, almost day-long trek on donkey from Jerusalem to the gravesite of Rachel Imainu. He set out early in the morning, right after the conclusion of the sunrise minyan. The entire way he contemplated and organized the prayers he would say there. He wanted to be sure not to forget anything, since it was only infrequently that he had the opportunity to make the journey.

When he finally arrived he saw that he was not alone. A woman with a number of small children had arrived previously and was making herself at home in the monument's domed chamber. She had already spread out a blanket and laid the youngest child down to sleep. When R' Dovid arrived she was busy preparing the evening meal.

R' Dovid was incredulous. Did she have no regard for the sanctity of the site? Didn't she realize where she was? How could this woman busy herself with such mundane matters in such a Holy place?

R' Dovid approached the woman and in a less than friendly tone demanded an explanation.


The weary woman looked up at R' Dovid from her seat on the floor and replied softly, "I would think that our Mother Rachel would be pleased that we are eating and resting here."

R' Dovid felt suddenly faint and uneasy. He realized that he had been making the journey to Rachel's Tomb for decades and had not even begun to understand what it represented. Here was a simple unlearned woman, yet she possessed a profound grasp of the true holiness of Rachel's Tomb. What had he been doing here all those years! He now understood that Rachel was the mother who wept and prayed for her children. Her desire is only that we should have some relief, some comfort in life, some peace of mind in order to better serve Hashem.

From that day on, whenever R' Dovid travelled to the Tomb of Rachel, he made sure to bring with him a meal which he would share with all the others who came to entreat our mother Rachel to intercede for them and bring their prayers on high.


*Reprinted from nishmas.org.*

*Editor's Note: Rachel Imeinu's Yahrzeit was last Sunday, 11th Cheshvan – October 17th of this year*



**Shabbat Times – Parshat Vayeira**

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	5:23	6:35	7:15
Tel Aviv	5:38	6:37	
Haifa	5:29	6:36	
Be'er Sheva	5:42	6:38	





### "Queen Esther" of Vilna

By Hillel Baron



Tomb of Sabbatai ben Meir ha-Kohen in Holešov

In 1648, Bohdan Khmelnytsky led Cossack pogroms against the Jews of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, leaving entire communities brutally murdered in their wake.

The following story has been told many ways, each version adding color and detail that sometimes complement and sometimes contradict the other tellings.

As word came that the murderous hordes were approaching Vilna, the city's Jews attempted to flee. Those who could not, barricaded themselves indoors and prayed for a miracle. Rabbi Shabtai HaKohen Katz, known as "the Shach" after his monumental work on the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law), fled into the forest with his young daughter, Esther.

The little girl was ill, and as they made their way deeper and deeper into the forest and the cold, she grew weaker by the hour.

Eventually, the Shach came to the sad conclusion that his beloved daughter, whom he had carried so tenderly, had passed on. But before he had a chance to bury her, he heard the sounds of riders. Thinking that it was the sound of the Cossacks, he left her on the ground and made a hasty escape.

In fact, it was actually the sound of a monarch on a hunting expedition. Soon, the hounds taking part in the sport began barking and following the smell of flesh. When the entourage came across the half-frozen girl, the king instructed his doctor to spare no effort in reviving her.

He was successful and the king adopted the girl. Soon, she became the dearest and closest friend of the king's daughter. All throughout, Esther remembered that she was Jewish and refused to eat non-kosher food or convert to Christianity.

One night, a fire broke out in the girls' living quarters. The princess was immediately evacuated, but before they could reach Esther, fire had already consumed her room. The castle staff searched for her remains, but did not find any. The princess was devastated.

What had happened, in fact, was that Esther had jumped out of the window and fled into the forest. There, she was kidnapped by a group of bandits who eventually brought her back to Vilna and offered her to the Jewish community for ransom. By that time, the Shach was no longer living there, having wandered on to Poland, Bohemia and Austria.

Reb Munish, a childless and wealthy Jew, paid the astronomical ransom requested by the bandits, and adopted her as his daughter. Slowly, she accepted many responsibilities around the home, and was admired for her capability and kindness.

Years passed, and the kind man's wife passed away. It was suggested that he marry the young woman who ran his household. He knew he could find no better match, and they were soon husband and wife. She became known around the city as a gracious hostess, always looking out for others.

Sometime later, the governor of Vilna passed a decree against the Jews of the area. The Jewish community gathered to pray and beseech Hashem for his mercy.

Esther became aware that the wife of this ruler was none other than the princess with whom she had become so close during her childhood. Recognizing that the key to her people's salvation was in her hands, she sought an audience with her erstwhile friend.

The princess was delighted to see her long-lost companion, and they spent hours catching up on each other's lives. Eventually, Esther broached the harsh decree, and the princess assured her that she would do her utmost to sway her husband. She was successful, and from then on, Esther was welcome in the castle, and succeeded in turning the heart of the ruler toward her people. She became known as "Queen Esther," after her namesake, who delivered the Jewish people from destruction during the Purim story.

One day, an esteemed rabbi arrived in town, and all the Jewish inhabitants gathered in the synagogue to hear him speak. As he spoke, Esther began experiencing flashbacks. She recognized his voice and his tone. And then it hit her - the sweet sound of her father studying while she played on the side as a child. She was sure of it.

She went right up to him, and father and daughter were tearfully but joyfully reunited.

Reprinted from an email of Chabad.Org Magazine.

After the angels of Hashem disguised as people tell Avraham at the prime age of 99 that his wife Sarah who was 89, would give birth to a baby the following year, Sarah overheard this in her quarters, and began to laugh. Hashem got upset and asked "why is she laughing? is there anything impossible for Hashem?"

Sometimes we feel so lost and don't know where to turn. We think there is no hope. I just read in the beautiful "Living with The Parsha" series a story about R' Mordechai Pogromansky zt"l who even as a young man was known all over the Lithuanian world as a unique individual of epic proportions in Torah and Mitzvot.

R' Mordechai was once riding the train when another person on the train suddenly cried out, "Oh no, I missed my stop! I'm a Mohel and I need to check on a baby, now I need to get off the next stop and take the train in the other direction I lost so much time."

R' Mordechai told the man, "You know in the Torah when it talks about how Avraham sent Hagar and Yishmael out of the house, it says that Hagar got lost in the desert of Be'er Sheva," Rashi says it means that she went back to her old ways of idol worship etc. Why was Rashi not happy with the literal meaning that she got lost, that she could not figure out where she was going and find her way? The answer is that a believing Jew knows that he is never "lost" because he knows that Hashem is always with him. If it seems he has lost all sense of direction, he can be satisfied knowing that Hashem wanted this to happen for whatever reason. So, if Hagar "became lost" this obviously means she did not live by the beliefs she picked up in the house of Avraham"

Believe it or not as the train pulled into the next train station, and the doors opened, there was someone on the platform shouting, "My wife had a baby boy, and today is the eighth day, we need a Mohel, does anyone know of a Mohel?".....

Friends, no matter where we are holding in life, we must always remember that as difficult as it gets, is it impossible for Hashem to save you from this situation? If I ended up in this situation it's because Hashem wanted me here, now it's my job to figure out why, and give true Nachat to our dear Father in Heaven who loves us more than anything in the world, and wants for us to succeed if we are putting in the effort He expects from us.

So let's give Nachat to Hashem 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 Taryag (613) mitzvot are counted from Vayera, there are many mitzvot to be found in the Parsha.

Many of the details of the Mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim, considered part of the mitzvah of G'milut Chassadim, are derived from the behavior of Avraham Avinu. Similarly, Bikur Cholim, is also a part of G'milut Chassadim, as well as being part of the mitzvah to emulate Hashem.

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 147  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 2085  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 7862

### HAFTORA:

Ashkenazim & Chabad: Melachim II 4:1-37

Sephardim & Community of Frankfurt am Main: Melachim II 4:1-23

**תשפ"א וירא**

Sponsored in honor of the birthdays of

רבקה לאה בת חיה ברכה

And

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Whose birthdays are

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תשפ"א

By The Fraenkel Family