

# The Jewish Weekly

## Two Crumpled Pictures

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Seven-year-old Boaz (fictitious name) came home almost in tears from his school in Kfar Vradim and handed his mother an envelope.

Kfar Vradim is a small, pastoral, village in the north of Israel founded on "open thinking" and liberal ideals. An "open, progressive school" was founded there, which attempted to eliminate divisions of aptitude, beliefs, and even pupils and teachers. This is where little Boaz learned.

His mother opened the envelope and found a letter from Boaz's teacher together with a crumpled picture of a rabbi.

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. C. This morning there were a few of these cards in our school. Someone must have put them here last night. Your son Boaz got so very angry when he saw them that he crumpled two of them up and threw them into the trash can. He said he hates religious rabbis, but he doesn't know why.

"So I suggested that maybe it would be fun if he did some research and write a paper on this rabbi. That way he wouldn't judge without knowing the facts. I hope you agree and would appreciate your feedback."

His mother looked at the crumpled picture. Under it was written in Hebrew; "The Lubavitcher Rebbe," and on the other side it said "Commandments to Bring Moshiach: Put on Tefillin every weekday. Learn Torah. Give Charity," and more.

At first, Boaz's parents just wanted to agree with their son and say no to the research. After all, those religious pictures had no place in their son's open school. Their little Boaz was right! But something about the rabbi in that picture aroused their curiosity.

"What do you think?" his mother asked his father. They talked it over and finally decided to help Boaz write the paper; maybe it would be fun!

But it wasn't as easy as they thought. First of all, the encyclopedia in their house had nothing written on "Lubavitch," "Rebbe" or "Moshiach," and almost nothing on "Commandments". And the Kfar Vradim public library didn't have much more, except for some Jewish stories by secular authors.

So they called a few friends.

After several phone calls they discovered that this Lubavitch Rebbe was also called the Rebbe of Chabad and had representatives in places called "Chabad Houses" all over Israel, and there was one in a town not far from them.

Little Boaz really was beginning to regret that he got everyone into this mess, but he was also getting curious.

The next day they picked him up after school and drove to the Chabad House they heard about. They felt a bit uneasy going into a religious Charedi (ultra-Orthodox) place but, after all, it was just a small school project.

There they were in for a few surprises. First of all, the rabbi in charge was young, pleasant and even

seemed to be happy; all of which were the opposite of what they supposed Judaism to be.

Then they discovered that this Lubavitcher Rebbe had written many dozens of books, some answering questions and others explaining Judaism's plan for the world.

Plan for the world?

They had always just figured that religious Judaism was insular and removed of the world. They couldn't figure out what was happening, and if it wouldn't have been for the young rabbi's beard and hat, they would have thought they were in the wrong place.

They talked for a while, borrowed several books and pamphlets and returned home to begin work.

They sat down, got organized and tried to objectively write a proper essay but each piece of information made them realize they had no idea what Judaism, especially Chassidic Judaism, was all about.

But what they did understand had its effect.

Especially when they got to the philosophy of the Baal Shem Tov - the father of Chassidic thought.

He taught that G-d is constantly creating, enlivening, and providing everything . . . that Torah is G-d's inner wisdom and will . . . and that the Jews are "part" of G-d Himself (see Tanya, books 1-2).

This, and the Baal Shem's use of Jewish mysticism and emphasis on joy, was not what they were expecting.

They finished the paper, Boaz handed it in to his teacher the next morning, and their life returned to normal.

Almost.

Boaz's father couldn't get the ideas they had read out of his mind.

Somehow, they made sense to him. He brought it up with his wife but she didn't agree at all. In fact, she found the ideas abhorrent.

Little Boaz was in the middle. So the topic was rarely discussed at home. It continued this way for several months, until one day Mrs. C. told her husband that she saw an advertisement for a three-day seminar in Jewish mysticism at a place called "Ascent" in the northern Israel city of Tsfat. She signed up for herself and her husband, explaining to him, "I figured that mysticism might be interesting. So why not?"

Anyway, the last day of the seminar found Mrs. C. convinced that Judaism has a soul and Mr. C aware that he wasn't really Jewish! He revealed that his father had been Jewish but not his mother.

Nine months later Mr. C. reappeared at Ascent with his wife but it was almost impossible to recognize them. He had taken a nine-month leave from work, converted to Judaism, and now sported a beard, hat, and tzitzit. His wife looked like someone that had been religious all her life.

All because their precious son had crumpled a picture, and thanks to the concern of a "liberal, progressive" teacher.

*Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.*

## It Once Happened...

### Why Do People Want My Brachot?

By Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

Rav Nattan Meir Wachtfogel, zt"l, the Mashgiach of Beit Midrash Govoha, a big Yeshiva in Lakewood, once visited Eretz Yisrael. The trip was particularly strenuous at his advanced age, especially since many people wished to meet with him and ask him for a Brachah.

One day, Rav Nattan Meir went to Daven at the Kotel. After he had finished praying, he turned around to see a long line of people waiting to talk to him!


Rav Nattan Meir patiently spoke with each person, listening to their requests and offering his Brachot. Later that evening, Rav Nattan Meir reviewed the day's events. He said, "Who am I, and what am I, that people should come to me for Brachot?" the Mashgiach humbly exclaimed to his student. "I want to clearly acknowledge the truth about myself. I carry a heavy burden on my shoulders for all the precious time that I've taken away from learning Torah. Moshiach will soon come, and everyone will find out who I really am. I will be so ashamed!"

The next day, the Mashgiach called someone who was having trouble with his personal relationships. This man had a very strong character, and his dominating personality was causing much strife.


Rav Nattan Meir told him, "Yesterday, I went to the Kotel to pray. When I finished, I turned around to see a huge line of people waiting. Do you know who they were waiting for? They were waiting for me. They wanted a Brachah from me. Why did they want to come to me for a Brachah and not someone else?"

"Why don't they go to you for a Brachah? Do you know why they were waiting for my Brachah and not for yours? It is because for my whole life, I have worked on being humble to others. Please," Rav Nattan Meir gently encouraged him, "please treat others with respect. Treat people respectfully, and be humble. Then they will also come to you for Brachot!"

*Reprinted from an email of Torah U'Tefilah.*



**Shabbat Times - Parshat Vayeira**

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
 Jerusalem	4:13	5:25	6:05
Tel Aviv	4:27	5:27	6:01
Haifa	4:17	5:25	6:02
Be'er Sheva	4:31	5:28	6:05



### “Oy Vey! Where is My Passport?”

By Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg



Rav Betzael Stern, zt”l

Rav Ephraim Wachsmann once related an amazing story. His grandfather, Rav Betzael Stern, zt”l, lived in London, but he grew up in Vienna. He was there when the Germans entered Vienna to seek out any Jews that were there. Everyone who could flee fled for their lives, and he went to France.

But then the Germans came to take over Paris, and tens of thousands of refugees sought a place to escape to, but there was nowhere to go. One day, he saw a man wearing a sailor uniform, and Rav Betzael asked him what he does. The man responded that he was heading out to England, and that he was wearing his sailor’s clothing.

Rav Betzael asked if he could join him, and the man agreed. But he told him, “You need visas to enter Britain. They won’t allow you entry without it.” With that, Rav Betzael headed to the British Consulate to arrange visas, but as he approached the offices, he saw hundreds, if not thousands of people already gathered around the entrance, holding papers to assure they could get visas, but the guards weren’t granting anyone entrance.

Miraculously, while he was waiting there, it started to rain torrentially. It rained so much so that the guards all ran inside for protection, and as they did, many of the people who had been trying to get in, followed them. Rav Betzael also joined them, and before he knew it, he was standing in front of the British consulate office.

He opened the door, and the man at the desk asked him how he could assist him. Rav Betzael responded that he’s a father of many children and he is in need of visas to go to Britain. The officer said, “But sir, there is no boat leaving for England now. How are you going to get to England?”

Rav Betzael replied, “I met a sailor who is sailing out tomorrow. He told me that if I come with visas, he’ll give me seats for my family on his ship.” The officer responded, “All right then. Show me your passports and I’ll prepare the visas.” Rav Betzael put his hand into his pocket

to take out the passports, and to his utter astonishment, he didn’t have them! He must have left them at home!

Realizing that he had now lost his last chance to escape, he fainted and collapsed to the ground. The next thing he knew, he was being revived with a cold splash of water on his face. When the officer saw the gravity of the situation, he kindly responded, “Don’t worry. I’ll write an official document that holds the British stamp, and you won’t have any trouble getting in to England with it.” He then handed Rav Betzael a document that had the official British stamp on it, with the names of his children, and his wife as well. Rav Betzael thanked him profusely, and left the office.

When he later looked at the document, he saw that there was still some space on the paper, and he said to himself, “I can add many names to this list and save other Yidden as well as my family!” He contacted other people he knew and added fifty people to his paper, and they were all able to escape. From those fifty people, many beautiful families and many generations of Yidden continue to owe their thanks to Rav Betzael!

Rav Betzael later reflected that had he brought the passports with him to the Consulate, all those precious people would not have been saved. It was only because Rav Betzael “forgot” the passports that he was able to get that paper, and it was that seemingly “terrible” oversight that ended up saving all of those generations of Yidden.

Rav Wachsmann said that many times, we don’t see the good within the situations that we encounter, but we must remember where our challenges are coming from. They’re coming from Hashem who loves us more than we love ourselves. Hashem’s love for us is infinite, and we must remember that anything that happens to us is all for our very best. Sometimes we have to endure a hardship, but that will only be so that it can lead us to a good outcome. Even though we don’t always see the “happy ending,” we must strengthen our Emunah and our reliance on Hashem that it is all being done for our own best, whether we see it at the present moment or not!

Reprinted from an email of Torah U’Tefilah.

It is possible for your parent not to be related to you.

And this applies to everyone. In Parshat Vayeira, Hashem pays the ultimate compliment to Avraham Avinu, by saying “למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו” - He shall command his children and his household following him,” - ושמרו דרך יהוה לעשות צדקה ומשפט” - so that they will follow the way of Hashem: to practice righteousness and justice.”

There is one word which seems to be redundant. It is the word ‘אחריו’ - ‘following him.’ Isn’t that obvious? I believe that this is actually the key word in this entire statement. Fascinatingly, in Parshat Bereishit, we are introduced to a man by the name of Yuval, and Yuval is described as being “אבי כל תפש כנור ועוגב” - The father of everyone who holds a harp and a pipe.”

Yuval was the father of music! He introduced music into the world and we see he is described as ‘אבי’ - ‘father.’ He’s the parent of all people who engage in musical activity, indicating that indeed somebody can be your parent, although you’re not related to them: what they have introduced influences your way of life.

Truly, that is what we mean when we refer to Avraham as being Avraham Avinu, Abraham our father. Of course we are privileged to be physically descended from him but that’s not the whole story. In addition, he introduced belief in Hashem into the world, and he went one step further. The text in Parshat Vayeira tells us “ושמרו דרך יהוה לעשות צדקה ומשפט” - So that they should keep the way of Hashem: to practice righteousness and justice.”

Avraham didn’t only ‘parent’ the concept of belief in Hashem. He ‘parented’ a concept of דרך ה’, a true religious way of life for all those who believe in Hashem, and that way of life must include tzedaka and mishpat. The legacy of Avraham therefore empowers us in our ways to always be mindful of our responsibility for tzedaka - righteousness, uprightness - to be considerate and to be compassionate at all times; and in addition, to guarantee that justice would always prevail.

And now there is a question we have to ask ourselves: What will we become the parents of?

So let’s all join together to pray with all our hearts for the healing of all those injured, for the safe return of those taken as hostages, as well as Divine Protection for our brave IDF soldiers, Police officers, medical professionals, Firefighters, ZAKA members, security personnel and all those citizens protecting us in Israel as well as around the world, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, safe, quiet and sweet 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

# וירא

Sponsored in honor of the birthdays of

רבקה לאה בת חיה ברכה

And

יוסף בן רבקה לאה

Whose birthdays are

כ"ג חשוון

ספ"א

By The Fraenkel Family