

HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE Our Part

BUYA "MIRACLE"

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD SURI OVERHEARD her parents talking between themselves about her seven-year-old brother just being diagnosed with a brain tumor, and the cost of the recommended surgery being way beyond their budget. "The only way that we can have him healed," said her father, "is with a miracle. We simply don't have the means for such an expensive surgery."



Hearing that her brother needed medical help, she immediately headed to the pharmacy. She hadn't clarified the situation exactly, but she'd heard the urgency in her father's voice and went to take action. The pharmacist noticed her, but was speaking with a customer and didn't immediately acknowledge her or assist her. Impatiently, she started banging on the counter to catch the pharmacist's attention.

The pharmacist thus interrupted his conversation and turned to her. "Can I help you?"

"I desperately need to buy a miracle!" she asked. "Can you sell me one?"

"Sorry, dear; we don't sell miracles!" replied the pharmacist.

"I have money, I'm not here as a joke!"

She started pulling out the money she took from her "piggybank," which totaled to \$1.11. She was willing to give all of it to buy the miracle.

Overhearing the conversation, the customer who'd been talking with the pharmacist said to her, "I sell miracles! Where do you live?"

"I live around the corner."

The individual headed over to her home with her and inquired of her parents what exactly was the needed "miracle."

Her father told him about the boy's diagnosis and the difficulties facing them. The guest told the father that for such a diagnosis, there happen to be very few surgeons in the world who can perform such a surgery. A tense quiet filled the air until he continued and said, "I happen to be one of those few neurosurgeons who can perform it!"

Seeing this family's dire situation, the doctor comforted them by agreeing to perform the surgery, free of charge. Understandably, the family was very joyful and went ahead with it. *B"H*, the surgery was successful, and their son returned to full health.

There are many lessons to be learned from this story. Among them are the great care Hashem gave them. They had no one to turn to, and Hashem, as always, came to help.

But there's an entirely different lesson that can be brought out. When one does what's in his capacity to do, Hashem does the rest. This girl couldn't do more than that. She did her very best by going to the pharmacy to get a "miracle," and that's what she got. After she did hers, the second part Hashem took care of.



THE BUG MIRACLE

One of the special people who supported the Branovitch Yeshiva was a man called R' Cheikel. Besides assisting them with their needs, every morning, he would go to the local bakeries to get bread for the hungry yeshiva boys. As he approached the bakers, he had a special morning charm of singing for them while requesting their generous donations. When he had a substantial amount of bread, he'd return home with the collected bread, as his house doubled as the yeshiva's dining room, and the boys would eat their breakfast.

After that was done, he'd then turn to the butchers and ask them for any leftover meat to sustain the yeshiva boys for their supper meal. For a long time, his efforts successfully kept the boys well nourished.

R' Elchanan Wasserman had a great admiration for R' Cheikel and for his dedication. One day, R' Elchanan called him over and asked him if he had any request that he could fulfill in return for what he does on behalf of the yeshiva.

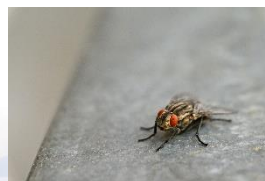


R' Cheikel responded that he never intended that the Rosh Yeshiva would grant him something in return for his work. But, if he was offering, he had one request: "Once a week, I ask that your shiur be given to the bachurim in my house. I may not understand what you'll be learning, but at least there should be learning in my home."

This wasn't so bizarre, since his home already served as the dining room for the older boys. Out of his hakaras ha'tov, R' Elchanan approved his request and set up his weekly shiur in his home. R' Cheikel diligently listened to R' Elchanan's shiur, though he didn't understand any of it.

It was known throughout Branovitch that no bug could be found in R' Cheikel's dining room. Though there were plenty of bugs swarming around the adjacent rooms, they stood immobile at the entrance to his dining room. Many people from the town came to observe this miracle, amazed at how the bugs didn't enter, despite the great amount of food that sat around.

When R' Elchanan was asked to explain what was happening in the home of R' Cheikel, all he said was that he hoped that in the Next World, they'll give him an opportunity to gaze at the portion awaiting R' Cheikel.



One time, R' Bornstein was analyzing the scene. Looking on with him was Mr. Dreazen, a well-known apikores who sought to disprove Yiddishkeit. This Yid didn't even come to shul on Yom Kippur, and here he was, trying to disprove the open miracle.

Mr. Dreazen told R' Bornstein that the bugs not entering R' Cheikel's dining room isn't proof of anything. "Look here," he said, and he took several bugs in his hand to try and bring them into the dining room. Yet, despite his brazenness, the bugs miraculously wouldn't go in. With all his force, he was unable to get them to go in. Several times he tried to disprove the miracle, but to no avail. The bugs just wouldn't go into the yeshiva's dining room.

זכרו תורת משה

A few days passed, and the news hit the yeshiva that Mr. Dreazen had returned to Yiddishkeit and was now becoming observant. Mr. Dreazen explained that when he saw what Hashem was doing for R' Chaikel despite his limited knowledge in learning, he understood that great power lies in learning. And although he wasn't the greatest talmid chacham, nevertheless, he was doing the best with whatever capacity Hashem had given him. That gave him the courage to start a fresh commitment to serving Hashem. (*Simchah Babyis*, p. 700)



"I HAVE 7 NIS AND EIGHTY AGOROT!"

A young eight-year-old girl once went into an exclusive jewelry retailer seeking to buy something. Not used to such a young shopper, the proprietor went over to "help" her young client find what she was looking for. "That watch," the young girl pointed to with confidence. "I brought money with me, if you'd like to know."

"Oh, great," the owner asked her. "How much do you have?"

"I have seven shekels and eighty agurot."

The owner didn't disclose how much the watch she wanted to buy actually cost, but instead asked her why she wanted to buy it. She responded that she wanted a gift for her older sister, who had been raising her and her five siblings singlehandedly after both their parents had passed away. "Today's her birthday," the girl said, "and from my *bakaras ha'tov*, I want to show her our appreciation. I think she'd really like that watch."

Hearing this the owner said: "Oh, well then, I'll give it to you for seven shekels and eighty agurot." The girl happily took the watch home, excited to have something to present to her sister.

Several hours later, the sister came into the store to return the watch. "My sister came home with this from your shop. I don't know how she got it, but I'm sure she didn't pay for it."

"But she did!" the owner replied. Then she told the older sister how the young girl had explained why she came to "buy" the watch and why the owner had "sold" it to her for the reduced price.

This incident shows how, despite not having the means to obtain the article on her own, after doing her half, Hashem took care of the rest.



THE TRANSFORMED UNIT

Noam Ramati, a religious commander in the Israeli army, was on a mission in Gaza. One day, there had been tense fighting, and only several minutes before *shekiab* did he realize that he hadn't yet put on tefillin. However, they were in a situation that didn't allow him to do so. The entire unit had to remain frozen in their position or else be in great danger; any movement would endanger his life, and the lives of his whole unit. Although he was certainly *patur* from putting on tefillin, nevertheless it bothered him greatly. The rest of the unit, with many non-observant Yidden, saw his pain and anguish of missing a day without tefillin.



The next morning, the unit was lined up by his bedside, all requesting a chance to put on his tefillin. They'd seen his anguish over not being able to put them on, and they got an appreciation for it, and ever since then, they all put on tefillin every day.

This lesson teaches us what can come out from a sigh over a missed mitzvah. He hadn't been able to actually put on tefillin that day, but nevertheless, the benefit that came out from it was great! He did his very best and left the rest to Hashem, which bore impressive fruit.



THE RELIGIOUS DOCTOR

A religious doctor from Germany learned of the yeshivas in Lithuania and the *mesiras nefesh* the boys there had for learning. In a sense, he envied their dedication and was intrigued by the whole idea of yeshiva.

He found a temporary replacement to fill in for him and took a "vacation." He visited all the main yeshivas — Slabodka, Mir, Grodno, Telz, Kamenetz, Kletzek, Ponovezh, and finally Radin.

After seeing them all, he was very sad and down. He approached the **Chofetz Chaim** and asked him: "What am I going to get in the Next World? I'm not sitting and learning like these boys, so what am I going to merit in the World to Come?"

"Calm down," responded the Chofetz Chaim. "*Kol Yisroel yesh labem cbelek l'Olam Haba* – all Yidden have a portion in Olam Haba."

"True," responded the doctor. "But what type will I get? Until today, I thought that I was in for a sizeable portion, but now I see that I'm far from perfection. I have been helping many people and attending shiurim in my community, trying my best, but now I see that I'm far from it."

The Chofetz Chaim replied with a powerful and fundamental principle. "It is possible that in the World to Come, we will be neighbors."



"Us?" thought the doctor. "The Chofetz Chaim isn't saying so as a joke. He must be serious!"

The Chofetz Chaim saw his astonishment and thus asked him: "Why does the Torah say that Gan Eden is situated in the center of the Garden? Why is it positioned so? Why can't it be on the side? Why is it particularly placed in the center?"

"The reason for this," answered the Chofetz Chaim, "is because when you have a circle around a center point, everyone is equally distanced from the center. Everyone is equally capable of getting to the wanted and aspired destination from wherever he is.

"The same is true with Gan Eden," continued the Chofetz Chaim. "You were brought up in your situation, and look what you've done with it. You're a doctor who helps people, and so you are therefore in for the greatest Olam Haba.

"I was brought up in Vilna, where I saw R' Yisroel Salanter, who inspired me to write the sefarim on halachah and mussar that I have written.

"You, on the other hand, were brought up in Germany, where the accepted practice was to work and learn, so for your situation, you'll be granted with the greatest Olam Haba." R' Yankel Galinsky repeated this story and concluded: "Everyone will be granted the greatest Olam Haba through the 'toll' that was granted to him. By utilizing the abilities one is granted, one fulfills the purpose of being created and will have an enjoyable Olam Haba." (V'Higadta)