

HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

It's Only Him

"I MUST ATTEND!"

The **Avnei Nezer** was very busy. Questions from all sides of the world came to his desk, and he was also involved in many of the issues facing Yidden during his time. Because of this, he wasn't able to attend many *simchas*; they were simply too much. Therefore, when he did attend one, you can be sure that he had a good reason for going.

Once, a simple tailor invited him to the *bris* of his firstborn child, born after fifteen years of waiting. The Avnei Nezer told the tailor that he would certainly attend, much to everyone's surprise.

His gabbai asked him, "The Rebbe doesn't usually go to any *bris*, especially if it's far away. Here, you're not only going, but to that of a simple tailor? What makes his *simchah* so unique?"

The Avnei Nezer replied, "This father made a *kiddush Hashem*, therefore I want to participate in this *bris*."

"What *kiddush Hashem* did he make?" asked the gabbai.

"This father told me that after his wife had been barren for fifteen years, 'Hashem, with His great mercy performed a miracle.' This was the first time someone said that it was Hashem Who made the miracle. Generally, people say that it was the Kotzker Rebbe or the Radzaminer Rebbe who performed the miracle, not Hashem. This father testified to Hashem bringing about the miracle, a *kiddush Hashem*, and I want to participate in this *bris*."

This story reminds us how we must view all the good we have as coming from Hashem. It wasn't "the power of my hand," my wisdom, or any of the other explanations; it's all from Hashem. We must remember this even by the miracles *tzaddikim* perform; they are also from Hashem, the result of their *tefillos* to Him. (Reprinted with permission from *Mechon Be'er Haparscha, Torah Wellsprings, Vayeitzei*, p. 5).



THE POTENTIAL DONORS

Rav Elchanan Wasserman, zt"l, once traveled to America to raise the much-needed funds for his yeshiva. At one of the shuls there, in front of an audience of potential donors who had the means of donating generously, he delivered a passionate speech about the value of supporting Torah. The entire congregation was visibly moved.



The rabbi of that shul, however, was from a different school of thought, and after Rav Elchanan's speech, the rabbi added a few words, saying that even a few dollars would suffice, since this was not a very worthy cause.

With those words, the crowd went from potentially giving thousands of dollars to not even giving a total of one hundred dollars. Afterward, the rabbi was worried that Rav Elchanan was angry at him, and he thus

went over to R' Elchanan to apologize. However, Rav Elchanan told him that what the rabbi had done didn't bother him in the least.

"When Hashem commanded Moshe to build the *Mishkan*," Rav Elchanan said, "Hashem told him that the actual builder would be Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur from *shevet* Yehudah. Moshe then went to search for him. He must have gone to the tribe of Yehudah and asked the first person he saw, 'Are you Betzalel ben Uri?' If the man said no, Moshe would then have gone to another person and asked him if he was Betzalel ben Uri. And if that man said no, Moshe would have continued until he found the person he was looking for.

"If those people replied they were not Betzalel, did Moshe get angry at them for not being the person he was looking for? Of course not. Those people were not *zocheb* to be Betzalel.

"The same applies here," continued R' Elchanan. "I came to America looking for Betzalel ben Uri to support my yeshiva. There are certain people who will be *zocheb* to be the Betzalels and support the yeshiva, and others who won't. It is clear that the members of your congregation are not from those people who are going to be Betzalel ben Uri. Should I be angry at that? For that reason, when you told the congregants that this was an unworthy cause, I understood that the listeners were undeserving, and I thus have no reason to be agitated or disturbed."



LAST RAY OF HOPE



After being childless for twenty years, the Shamni couple reached out to an adoption agency with the hope of adopting a child. There was a list of questions that they had to answer to determine their suitability. One of the questions was: "State, in order of preference, the five things

you love most." Reb Eliyahu Shamni wrote on top of the list "Hashem" and then filled out the other four.

They asked Reb Shamni, "If you adopt a child, will you love that child more than the five items you listed here?"

Reb Shamni answered, "I will never love anyone or anything more than Hakadosh Baruch Hu! I can't sign this!"

There was another religious couple in the agency at that time. They were also applying for adoption. They told Reb Shamni, "It's just a procedure. Tell them what they want to hear. You don't have to tell them the truth."

זכרו תורת משה

Reb Shamni replied emphatically, "I love Hashem more than everything in the world, and I refuse to say differently." The Shamnis were thus disqualified and left empty-handed.

Nine months later, the Shamni's had twins. The other couple they met at the agency was approved, but after nine months, they were still waiting for their opportunity to adopt. By this time, Reb Shamni and his wife were *bentched* with their own set of children.

Reb Shamni told over, "When one doesn't give up on the One (Hashem), he ends up with two (children)."



"DON'T ACCUSE ME!"

An affluent businessman came complaining to the **Avodas Yisroel** that all his wealth and assets were stolen. "At midnight, a thief broke into my home and ransacked all my valuables. I am left with nothing!"

The Rebbe wonderingly replied: "Do you think I stole it? Why are you accusing me? I have witnesses who will testify that I couldn't have been there at that time. So, why are you condemning me?"

"I wasn't accusing the Rebbe," replied the man. "All I was saying was that I had a tremendous loss, and I was looking to receive a *brachab* from the Rebbe for success and to get back the lost money." With that, he pulled out some more money to give as a *pidyon* to merit the *yeshuab*.

"I'll agree," replied the Rebbe, "on condition you give me fifty gold coins. Only then will I give you a *brachab*."

"Fifty gold coins?" the man repeated, stunned. He stood up to leave, telling his wife, "I'd rather daven to Hashem than pay so much for a *yeshuab*. Hashem can help us without fifty gold coins."

As soon as the Rebbe heard those words, he told the man that he could sit down and not worry. "Your salvation is on its way. I only intended to bring you to realize that the One and Only source of your salvation is Hashem. Now that I hear you agreeing with me, you merited your salvation, and you'll see that your loss will be reimbursed."

And so it was. He turned on his own to Hashem, asking that he reimburse him for his loss, and within a short amount of time, he got back all his belongings.

When we come to the realization that Hashem is the One and only One that grants us our salvation, that itself has the power to bring exceptional results. Every Yid has his own connection with Hashem that enables and privileges him to turn to Him and see *yeshuos*.



YOU SHOULD'VE... YOU COULD'VE...

Rebbe Chaim of Chernowitz, זי"א, author of *Be'er Mayim Chaim* and other *sefarim*, was a very big *tzaddik*. One time, he repeated a vision that he saw on Friday night as his *neshamah* was going to *Shamayim*. While there, he saw many *neshamos* standing before the *Beis Din shel Ma'alab*, the Heavenly Court. These *neshamos* were told that they must return to this world as a *gilgul*, a returning *neshamah*, because of past misdeeds.

Upon hearing their ruling, they cried before the court that there needed to be a change in the system. They explained that they had been in this world several times already, and that each time, they failed in the mission and were sent again to *Olam Hazeh*.

"What is the purpose of sending us to *Olam Hazeh* again and again?" they cried. "We will probably fail another time!"

The court replied, "Times have changed. The judgment isn't as difficult as it was in the past. There is a greater likelihood that you will pass the test. You just need to be cautious about one thing: Never say: 'I should have.' If you can avoid saying those words, you have passed the test and will merit *Olam Haba*."

According to this vision, the main goal is to go through life without saying, "I should have done things differently." Believe that everything is perfectly planned, including your own choices, and you have passed the test of life.



MAZAL TOV!

A *chassid* of the **Sefas Emes** was childless for many years. The local medical practitioners didn't have any solution. They were advised to travel to Poland to get a consolation with a world-famous doctor who was known for outstanding results.

The problem was that this couple didn't have any money, neither for the doctor nor for the trip. The *chassid* turned to the Sefas Emes for advice; should they try saving up for the expensive trip and doctor's fees? The Rebbe responded that there was no need to travel for his salvation. "Stay in your house, and Hashem will be there for you."



He returned home with the advice from the Rebbe and trusted wholeheartedly in the Rebbe's guidance, not doing any further attempts to plan their trip.

Weeks and months passed, but the *yeshuab* was nowhere in sight. Without telling her husband, the wife decided that she was going to save up small sums of money each month for the trip. She hoped that by the time she had all the money, he'd see the need to go to this doctor, and when he had that change of mind, she would be ready with the money.

One day, when the husband was home alone, it was a bit cold in the house, so he decided to ignite the fireplace. Rather than light a big fire, as he was the only one there, he lit a fire in the small one, which they hadn't used for many months.

When she returned home, she was in for the shock of her life. The small stove was exactly where she'd been hiding the money she'd been saving! In a few minutes, all her efforts had gone up in smoke (literally)! Seeing this, she decided that the only place she could turn was to Hashem, and that's exactly what she did. It didn't take long for Hashem to send them a child.