

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS BO 5785

Volume 16, Issue 19 3 Shevat 5785/February 1, 2025

Printed L'illuy nishmas Nechama bas R' Noach, a"h

For a free subscription, please forward your request to keren18@juno.com

Past emails can be found on the website – ShabbosStories.com

Building Faith with Lego Bricks



In the sun-baked town of Netivot, nestled in Israel's southern periphery, Rabbi Gil Manor had a vision: to ignite people's anticipation for redemption. His solution? A unique, self-assembly Lego model of the Holy Temple. "I believe the Moshiach will come in our lifetime," he says with unwavering conviction.

Rabbi Gil Manor, now 47 and a father of five, serves as a Chabad emissary in Netivot. Born in Nahariya to a traditional family, young Gil wasn't raised to observe Jewish commandments. That changed when he was eight years old, marking the beginning of his path to faith.

"It was a Friday evening," Gil recalls. "I was playing with my friends outside our apartment building when I saw our neighbor coming down, dressed in his finest

clothes. Curious, I asked him where he was going. He told me he was wearing his Sabbath clothes and heading to the synagogue.”

Intrigued, the following week, Gil asked his mother to dress him up too. He waited for his neighbor and asked to join him. “That was my first time in a synagogue,” he says. “It was during the first Lebanon war in 1982.”

The synagogue community embraced young Gil, offering him a warm welcome that would shape his future. “I felt drawn to the place, to the prayers. Each prayer service was an experience for me,” he says fondly.

His newfound passion led him to request a transfer to a religious school the following year. “Both schools shaped my life positively,” he reflects.

As Gil’s interest in religious life grew, his family began to follow suit. His father didn’t oppose his son’s new path, and his mother became more observant herself. Later, his siblings also embraced a more religious lifestyle, with some even transferring to Chabad educational institutions in the north.

Gil’s spiritual journey continued to unfold through his teenage years and early adulthood. His mother, seeking guidance for her son’s education, consulted with the local Chabad emissary, Rabbi Israel Butman of blessed memory. “Rabbi Butman recommended that I study at the Chabad Yeshiva in Lod,” Gil remembers. This advice would prove pivotal in shaping his future.

Following this recommendation, Gil’s path became clearer. “Rabbi Baruch Wilhelm taught me Talmud,” Gil recalls with gratitude, “and I was fortunate to be accepted into the Chabad Yeshiva in Lod.”

This yeshiva experience was transformative for Gil. “It shaped my life,” he says, “until I became a Chabad emissary myself, serving under the chief emissary in Netivot, Rabbi Yashar Edrei.”

About five years ago, Gil began a journey that would lead to his innovative Lego Temple project. He started organizing activities for children about the Holy Temple. “I saw how fascinated the children were,” he explains, “and how engaging with the Temple strengthened their faith in the coming of the Moshiach.”

This inspiration led him to develop a Lego model of the Temple, consisting of 1,590 pieces. “The idea was that every child could build the Temple with their own hands,” he says. The project required precision in construction, with Gil investing extensive study to ensure accuracy. He also prepared a detailed album explaining each stage of construction and the function of every Temple detail.

Finding a Lego factory that met their requirements wasn’t easy. “But thank G-d,” Gil says, “we saw the fruits of our labor when the work was completed.”

The final model was launched a few months ago, and the responses have been deeply moving. One mother, Noa, shared a touching story about her child’s prayer:

“We bought our son the Lego Temple kit as an Afikoman gift (a special gift given to children during the Passover Seder). It’s the most amazing gift I’ve ever

seen. When my son finished building the Temple, he said, ‘Just as I prayed for the completion of the Lego Temple, we should pray for the real Temple.’ It was simply touching.”

Gil invested two and a half years in learning, development, and construction of this project. “I saw G-d’s hand guiding us at every step,” he reflects. “When I think about it, I’m confident the Moshiach will come in our time. Many people today are engaged with the Temple, each in their own way, and I have no doubt that G-d sees this and derives great satisfaction from it.”

He concludes with a heartfelt prayer: “May we soon celebrate together the dedication of the Third Temple!”

Reprinted from the Parshat Mikeitz 5785 email of L’Chaim, a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY. Adapted from Sichat Hashavua.

The Uncle’s Offer And the Blanket



Rav Joey Haber shared a story. The Yeshivos in Europe were unlike the Yeshivos in our days. Today, the Yeshivos take full care of all the needs of the Bachurim, but it wasn’t so in Europe. The Yeshivos didn’t have dormitories. Most

Bachurim were away from home, and the boys would sleep on the benches in the local Shul. Even then, the benches weren't enough for all the boys. Often, only the older Bachurim had the privilege of sleeping on a bench, while the younger Bachurim slept on the floor.

The Enticing Telegram from the Boy's Uncle

There was one particular thirteen-year-old boy who was having a hard time sleeping on the floor, and he was getting tired of being in Yeshivah. One day, he got a telegram from his elderly uncle. It read, "We are offering you to take over our successful business. We don't have any descendants to continue it, and you're the most capable relative to continue it, so please come and we'll set you up."

This boy was very tempted by the offer. Sleeping on a cold stone floor on a wintery night wasn't so enjoyable, and with uncomfortable sleep every night, he asked himself what he was really getting out of Yeshivah anyway. He thought to himself, "I can't continue like this. Enough is enough. I'm going to take my uncle up on the offer," and he decided to leave Yeshivah.

The night before he left, the door of the Shul opened, and a woman who had just lost her husband walked in with a stack of blankets. Her husband had owned a blanket shop, and she was giving the Bachurim what she hadn't sold from the business. All the Bachurim, especially this boy, happily took her gift.

Asked His Grandson to Drive Him to the Haifa Levayah

Many years later, in 1976, the Rosh Yeshivah of Ponovezh, the great Rav Elazar Menachem Mann Shach, zt"l, called his grandson into his office. He told him, "We need to go to Haifa today. There is a woman who passed away, and I want to be at her Levayah."

The grandson complied, and they drove through the rain to the cemetery in Haifa. However, the grandson was surprised to see how few people were there, and Rav Shach and he were needed to complete the Minyan. This made the grandson very curious, and he wondered why his Zaide was partaking in this Levayah. The rain persisted through the Levayah, and after the Kevurah, everyone quickly made their way back to their cars.

The grandson escorted Rav Shach to the car also, but Rav Shach didn't immediately get in. Instead, he stood out in the rain for a little while longer. Eventually, Rav Shach got into the car, and they drove back to Bnei Brak. Rav Shach was aware of his grandson's confusion, and he explained himself.

Owes His Spiritual Success to the Woman Who Died

"This woman was responsible for making me who I am. If not for her, I wouldn't have continued in Yeshivah, and I wouldn't have become the Rosh

Yeshivah I am now. This lady was the woman who gave us the blankets that night long ago, when I was ready to leave the Yeshivah. I had been so cold and so tired, and I was ready to take up my uncle's offer to work in his business. When she arrived that night and gave us those blankets, it gave me the Chizuk to stay in Yeshivah, and I declined my uncle's offer."

The grandchild asked, "But what was the reason that you stayed out in the rain when we had gotten back to the car?"

Rav Shach said, "I wanted to remember how it felt laying on the cold stone floor every night during those freezing wintery nights, and what her gift had spared me from feeling. That way, I can properly appreciate what she did for me!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayishlach 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.

Conclusive Proof

By Rabbi Yisaschar Frand



Vilna Gaon

During the time of the Vilna Gaon, a young couple had gotten married, and shortly afterward, the husband vanished without a trace. The poor wife was left an agunah, a living widow unable to remarry because her husband might still be alive. Thirty years passed, and then, one fine day, a man appeared on her doorstep and declared that he was her long-lost husband and told her a long story about what had kept him from returning for so many years.

The woman looked at the man and did not recognize him as her husband. The man was about the same build and coloring as her husband, but he did not seem

familiar and she expressed her reservations to him. “Test me,” he said. “Ask me any question about our life together. See if I know the answers.”

So, she asked him questions, and he had all the answers but she remained suspicious, and it was decided to seek the advice of the Vilna Gaon.

“Take the man to the shul,” said the Gaon. “Ask him to point out his makom kavua, the place where he normally sat.”

They took him to the shul and asked him to point to his seat. The man hemmed and hawed, but he could not do it. Then he broke down and admitted that he had learned all his information from the husband whom he had befriended many years earlier.

The Vilna Gaon The Vilna Gaon had put his finger on the flaw in this man’s diabolical plan. Assuming that the man was an impostor seeking to move in with another man’s wife, he was obviously far from a righteous person. Such a person would seek out all sorts of important details to “prove” his identity, but it would not occur to him to find out about the husband’s seat in shul or any of the other holy matters in Jewish life.

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayigash 5785 edition of At the ArtScroll Table.
Excerpted from

Living Emunah – Our Greatest Gain

By Rabbi David Ashear

The Sefer Sas B'Imratecha shares a story about two older boys who were still unmarried. They decided to travel to Tzfat to immerse in the mikveh of the Arizal and to pray at kivrei tzaddikim. They also planned to spend Shabbat there. They set out on a Friday morning, but delay after delay and unprecedented traffic left them on a bus near Teveria with only half an hour remaining before Shabbat. Fortunately, they had a friend in Teveria, so they got off the bus, hoping to locate his house and have a place to stay for Shabbat.

They hailed a taxi but couldn't provide the driver with a precise address. With just ten minutes left before Shabbat, they decided to get out in a nearby neighborhood. Desperate, they approached the closest building and knocked on the first door they encountered.

The ba'al habayit opened the door and saw two young men standing there with suitcases. After they quickly explained their situation, he happily invited them to stay for Shabbat. They changed and set off for shul. During the meal, they shared with their host the challenges they faced that day and how they ended up in Teveria with only minutes to spare before Shabbat.

The baal habayit reassured them, saying, "It was all min haShamayim. Do you think it was a coincidence that you were dropped off near my house? Do you think it was random that you knocked on my door? Let me explain what happened today."

He continued, "We were in need of a yeshua, so my wife and I traveled to Ukraine to pray at the kever of the Ba'al Shem Tov. We found ourselves there for Shabbat without any food, unsure of what to do. Then we met a group of Jews from America. They were so warm and welcoming, inviting us to join them for Shabbat. We had the most beautiful Shabbat, with an abundance of food for every meal. We thanked our hosts and praised Hashem for sending us such kind individuals to take care of us.

Prayed for the Zechut to Fulfill this Mitzvah Ourselves

"Before we left Ukraine, we returned to the kever of the Ba'al Shem Tov. Inspired by the incredible hachnasat orchim we experienced, we prayed for the zechut to fulfill this mitzvah ourselves.

"We returned from our trip this morning. My wife was utterly exhausted, but she quickly prepared food for Shabbat so she could rest. Later in the day, our married children called to invite us to spend Shabbat with them. However, we were already asleep when they called. Instead, they cooked for us and delivered an entire Shabbat meal. Suddenly, we had double the food we needed.

"Then, the doorbell rang, and you two were standing there. At that moment, everything fell into place. We prayed for the zechut of hosting guests, and Hashem not only prepared all the food but also sent the guests we longed for right to our doorstep."

That Shabbat, the atmosphere was electrifying. They sang zemirot, shared divrei Torah, and experienced a truly uplifting Shabbat. One week later, a shadchan contacted one of the boys and suggested a shidduch with the daughter of the family who hosted them. A month later, they celebrated their engagement.

Even if the shidduch had not happened, the story would still be incredible. The couple understood the value of a mitzvah and prayed to Hashem for the opportunity to fulfill it. Hashem orchestrated so many events to grant them that opportunity.

The shidduch was a beautiful bonus. But the main purpose of this world is Torah and mitzvot, and whenever we have the zechut to perform any mitzvah, we should recognize it as our greatest gain.

Reprinted from the Parshat Vayeishav 5785 email of iTorah.com

The Doctor's Son

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein, Shlit"a, gives Shiurim to Jewish doctors, and he related that at the end of one of these Shiurim, a doctor approached him and shared that he had gotten married fifteen years earlier, and he was told that medically, it was impossible for him to father a child.

He said that when he and his wife were told that this would be their lot, they adopted a child. A year prior, this adopted child entered the first grade, and he received his first Siddur. This boy was overcome with excitement! When questioned why, he explained, "Now that I have a Siddur, I will daven that Hashem should finally give me a brother. I will not stop begging Hashem for a brother!"

Pained, the doctor was filled with pity for the young child, thinking that his request will never be filled. About nine months passed, and the doctor had just merited to bring his own newborn child to have a Bris! After fifteen long years of waiting, the doctor and his wife gave birth to a healthy child. The innocent adopted child did not know the verdict of all the doctors. He simply davened to Hashem from the depths of his heart, and his tefilos accomplished supernatural results!

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayishlach 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.

"One of Those People"

By Rabbi Joey Haber

The story is told of an observant Jewish woman who needed to undergo serious surgery on her scalp. When she arrived at the hospital for the operation, she was reminded that she needed to wash her hair with a special shampoo before the surgery. The surgery could not be performed without her first washing with this shampoo – but the woman had forgotten to wash before coming to the hospital.

The nurse told her that there was a pharmacy nearby where she might be able to buy the shampoo. If she could go and buy it, the nurse said, then they could

perform the surgery that day, but if not, she would have to wait another two months, which could be dangerous, given her condition.

The woman raced to the pharmacy – only to find the staff closing the door. She pleaded with them to let her in so she could buy the shampoo, explaining the gravity of the situation. The cash registers were already closed, but the cashier who was locking up agreed to let the woman take the shampoo.

“If you can, send your husband to pay for it tomorrow,” the employee said. “If not, I’ll take it off my salary.”

The woman thanked her profusely, bought the shampoo, and had the operation. The next day, her husband came to the pharmacy. He found the cashier he needed to speak to, and explained that he was the husband of the woman who was there the previous night to buy the special shampoo. He said he had come to pay.

The cashier called out to her coworker across the room, “Hey Jack, you owe me \$50!”

Jack came and saw what happened. The cashier explained to the husband that Jack had bet \$50 that the woman’s husband would not come to pay for the shampoo.

“Wait, it’s not fair,” Jack said, pointing to the visibly Orthodox Jewish man by the counter. “If I had known that this woman was one of these people, I would never have made the bet.”

Reprinted from the Parshat Vayeishav 5785 email of iTorah.com

You Never Know...

By Rabbi David Ashear

Mr. and Mrs. Meisels* were invited by Renewal to a Shabbaton for kidney donors. It was going to be an inspiring weekend for all who ever donated a kidney, and they were looking forward to it. Also invited was Gitty,* a single young woman in her upper thirties who had donated a kidney to her father. A staunch supporter of the organization, he really wanted to attend the Shabbaton with his daughter.

But Gitty was uncomfortable at the prospect. “I don’t know anyone else who’s going,” she told her father, “and I won’t have anyone to sit with. I’m really not in the mood.”

“You never know,” her father replied. “Maybe we’ll find your zivug there.”

“I highly doubt it – and I’m definitely not going for that!”

Gitty’s father persisted. “We’ll be in a room filled with people who saved other people’s lives. The merits in that room will be enormous. It will be an opportune time to daven.”

She still didn't want to go, but she accompanied her father to honor his wishes. Gitty was seated at a table next to Mrs. Meisels. The two chatted throughout the meal, and the older woman was very impressed with the younger one's intelligence, yiras shomayim, and beautiful middos.

When they got home, Mrs. Meisels told her husband, "I think Gitty would be perfect for my brother." She was right. Gitty, who was at that time almost forty, got engaged to Mrs. Meisels' brother. She had been looking to get married for over twenty years and, in the blink of an eye, Hashem brought her to her zivug. (Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – "Living Emunah on Shidduchim")

Reprinted from the Parshas Mikeitz 5785 email of The Weekly Vort.

Roadside Assistance

The road stretched ahead of them, a dark ribbon weaving through the mountains. David sat hunched over the wheel, eyes straining to find a familiar landmark, while his wife gripped a map in anxious hands. It was too dark to read it at 1:00 in the morning - not that it would do them any good. They were on the New York State Thruway, trying to get to the Catskill Mountains. And they were completely lost. Suddenly, the car started making unusual noises. The car was bumping loudly with each tire rotation. Then it became difficult for David to keep the car in his lane. It kept pulling to one side.

David pulled over at the side of the deserted road. It didn't take him long to spot the trouble. The right front tire was completely shredded. Some nails had punctured the tire and had torn it apart. He glumly reported the damage to his wife.

"What can we do?" she wanted to know.

"The tire has to be changed. But it's not something I'd care to tackle myself."

"The highway is pretty deserted," she said doubtfully. "How will we get help?"

"We'll have to wait. Someone should pass by soon," David said optimistically.

It wasn't all that soon. But an hour later, a car came passing by - then slowed, and stopped. David watched in relief as the driver stepped out of the car. "You guys need help?" the man called.

"Yes, please," David said thankfully. "If you could lend me a hand with my tire..."

The man walked over and studied the tire. “Yeah, you’ll need to change the tire. This one’s history.” He glanced over at David - then stared in surprise. “Are you an Orthodox Jew, by any chance?”

“Well, yes, I am,” David admitted. “Why do you ask?”

The man smiled. “Well, this is just amazing! Listen to this. Yesterday, I was driving with my daughter in the mountains, and my car runs out of gas. I sat there for hours, waiting for someone to stop. Finally, this religious Jewish guy pulls up, takes me to the gas station, and does everything he can to help me out.

“I decided right then and there that from now on, I’m going to stop for anyone I see who needs help. Now here it is, the very next day, and the first person I stop for is a religious Jew!” The man nodded in a satisfied way. “Now that’s what I call justice!”

David thanked Hashem - and then his unknown benefactor. That religious Jew would never know how his good deed helped another Jew in need. (Visions of Greatness VI)

Reprinted from the Parashat Vayigash 5785 email of Rabbi David Bibi’s Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.

Glimpses of Greatness

By Rabbi Yaakov Moskowitz

In Bnei Brak, a visitor once came to see Reb Aharon Leib Shteinman *zt”l* after not having been in his house for over thirty years. After looking around, he remarked, “Everything here still looks the same, Rebbe.” Reb Aharon Leib let out a brief smile. “It’s not the house that’s supposed to be updated and renovated; it’s the people who live in the house who are really supposed to change.”

Reb Aharon Leib lived a life of remarkable growth, always seeking knowledge. Those close to him recall how he would often be hunched over his *sefarim*, rarely returning to his room to sleep. Instead, he would doze off at his *shtender* for a few hours each night before resuming his studies. His dedication to Torah ultimately led him to publish his renowned work, *Ayelet HaShachar*, which comprises seventeen volumes on Shas and five volumes on Chumash.

Yet, a few years before his passing, when his son attempted to arrange for him to learn in a quiet apartment away from distractions, Reb Aharon Leib politely declined. “If I do that,” he explained, “where will I get my *yissurim* from? People come to me at all hours of the night for advice and blessings. I need those challenges.”

It was well known that Reb Aharon Leib possessed a warm and caring heart, and his empathy was profound. This is why so many people lined up outside his house for counsel, where he would greet each individual personally. His sensitivity was so deep that most days, after meeting with everyone, he would sit with his eyes closed for about five to ten minutes, deep in thought and mumbling words of prayer.



Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman, zt”l

At one time, his grandson asked him, “Saba, are you preparing for Rosh Hashanah? Are you learning Kabbalah? What are you doing?” He replied, “After I hear so many stories, I can't help but feel for everyone's pain and spend a few minutes davening for each individual.”

Reb Aharon Leib was always seeking ways to help others. Despite his own personal poverty, he would discreetly put money in envelopes and deliver them to those in need. After Rebbetzin Steinman passed away, several grandchildren would come and sing *zemiros* with Reb Aharon Leib to brighten up his meals. After seven years, Reb Aharon Leib told them they had to stop.

When asked why, he explained that their neighbor upstairs had passed away recently and there was a widow living there. He expressed concern about how she would feel hearing the beautiful *zemiros* coming from their apartment, reminding her of the joyous Shabbat meals she once shared with her husband. It was only after they learned that her grandchildren were also coming to sing *zemiros* with her that Reb Aharon Leib agreed they could resume.

Reprinted from the Mikeitz Torahanytime Newsletter.

The Power of Tehillim



The Rebbe Maharash (Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn, 1860-1920) would travel for fresh air in the countryside around Lubavitch and often stop in one of the forests, sit on the ground, and recite Tehillim with tears on behalf of Klal Yisroel. On his way, he would pass a certain Yiddish-owned inn, but he never entered.

One time, however, he ordered his wagon driver to stop, and upon entering the house, found two young boys alone at home. The Rebbe asked them to bring a Tehillim and together they sang the pesukim, repeating each word after him.

When the mother returned home, she was surprised to find the Rebbe in her home. The sweet tune to which he and her boys were reciting Tehillim brought her to tears. After half an hour, the Rebbe got up to go, but as he approached the door, he suddenly stopped, turned around and took the Tehillim to read some more. Sometime later, he bentched them all and left.

Hours passed, night fell, but the father did not return home. The mother tried to assure her children that he would soon return, but in truth, she was quite fearful herself. Finally, in middle of the night, there was a knock on the door. Hearing her husband's voice, the mother quickly opened it, but as soon as her husband entered, he fell to the ground in a faint.

After he revived, he shared his day's experience:

"I had gone to collect an old debt from one of the goyishe farmers. He invited me into the barn to pay up with grain, but then locked the door, tied me up, and tried to kill me. I pleaded with him, saying that I would absolve him of the debt, but he refused to listen. Searching for his axe, he left the barn, and tied the door from the outside. Realizing that my end was near, I began to recite vidui.

"At that moment the goy's wife passed the barn, heard my cries, and entered. I begged her to set me free. At first she wouldn't hear of it, fearful that her husband would kill her. At last, she gave in, untied me, directed me to the best escape route, and quickly returned to the field.

When the goy returned, he was fuming, and chased after me. I had anticipated this, and so I was hiding in the tall grass along the road. The goy came so close that I could smell the stench of his whiskey, but Boruch HaShem, he missed me and eventually returned home. I waited a while to be sure he would not see me, and then I came home."

Hearing his story, the woman exclaimed, "Now I understand why the Rebbe stopped by today and said Tehillim twice with the boys – once, so that you be set free, and again, so that the goy should not find you. Blessed be HaShem Who always works miracles for us!"

Reprinted from the Parshat Shemot 5785 edition of The Weekly Farbrengen.

Heartfelt Tehillim, Even with Many Mistakes

Though Rebbitzin Chaya Mushka, the wife of the Tzemach Tzedek, would recite a lot of Tehillim, she would do so with many mistakes. When one of her sons pointed this out to her, she asked her husband whether perhaps she should stop saying Tehillim.

The Rebbe advised her to continue and then called for his son and admonished him, saying that it was her Tehillim that had protected him at the Rabbinic Conference in Petersburg in ג'רת (1843).

The government, enraged by his views, had placed the Rebbe under house arrest twenty-two times, and it was her Tehillim that had saved him from a more serious punishment. On another occasion, too, when a libel was plotted against the Tzemach Tzedek, he asked his wife to recite Tehillim for him.

Reprinted from the Parshat Shemot 5785 edition of The Weekly Farbrengen.