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Rabbi David H. Toiv זצ"ל Chairman
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718-338-4999
www.JewishHeritage.org

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Srulie Toiv - Editor / Stories Compiled by Daniel Keren ע"ה לעילוי נשמת נחמה בת ר' נח

Dedicated in memory of Chaya Yehudis Bas Rav Yehoshua ע"ה

The Woman's Shocking Request in the Concentration Camp

The following story was told by Rabbi Yisroel Spira, the Rebbe of Bluzhov, who witnessed it in the Janowska Concentration Camp: Each morning at dawn, the Germans would lead us out of the camp for a day of hard labor that ended only at nightfall. Each pair of workers was given a huge saw & expected to cut its quota of logs. Because of the horrendous conditions in the camp & the starvation rations on which we were supposed to subsist, most of us could barely stand on our feet. But we sawed away, knowing that our lives depended upon it; anyone collapsing on the job or failing to meet his daily quota was killed on the spot, Hashem forbid. One day, as I pulled & pushed the heavy saw with my partner, I was approached by a young woman from our work detail. The pallor of her face showed her to be in an extremely

Dedicated In Memory Of
Richard Coonie ע"ה

Dedicated In Memory Of
Adina Hamlin ע"ה

weak physical state. "Rebbe," she whispered to me, "do you have a knife?" I immediately understood her intention & felt the great responsibility that rested upon me. "My daughter," I begged, concentrating all the love & conviction in my heart in the effort to dissuade her from her intended deed. "Do not take your own life. I know that your life is now a living hell, from which death seems a blessed release. But we must never lose hope. With Hashem's help, we will survive this ordeal & see better days." But the woman seemed oblivious to my words. "A knife," she repeated. "I must have a knife. Now. Before it is too late." At that moment, one of the German guards noticed our whispered conversation & approached us. "What did she say to you?" He demanded of me. We both froze. Conversing during work was a grave transgression. Many a camp inmate had been shot on the spot for far lesser crimes. The woman was first to recover. "I asked him for a knife," she said. To my horror, she then addressed her request to the guard: "Give me a knife!" The German, too, guessed her intention, & a devilish smile flickered on his lips. Doubtless he had seen the bodies of those who, out of desperation, threw themselves during the night on the electrified fence that surrounded the camp; but this would be a novel sight for him. Still smiling, he reached into his pocket & handed her a small knife. Taking the knife, she hurried back to her work station & bent over a small bundle of rags that she had placed on a log. Quickly unraveling the bundle, she took out a tiny infant. Before our astonished eyes, she swiftly & skillfully circumcised the week-old boy. "Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the Universe," she recited in a clear voice, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments & commanded us to enter him into the

covenant of Avroham our Father." Cradling the child in her arms, she soothed his cries. Then, she addressed the heavens: "Master of the Universe! Eight days ago, you gave me a child. I know that neither I nor he will long survive in this accursed place. But now, when you take him back, you will receive him as a complete Jew." "Here is your knife," she said, handing the holy object back to the German. "Thank you." In Parshas Vayeira, we read about the after-effects of the mesirus nefesh - the self-sacrifice of Avrohom Avinu who circumcised himself at the age of 99. Jews throughout the centuries have showed tremendous self-sacrifice for the mitzvah of bris milah. Unfortunately, in America many children are "circumcised" in the hospital soon after they are born, rather than on the eighth day as prescribed by halacha. Therefore, & due to other reasons, a bris milah done in the hospital is most likely not a kosher bris. Thus, there are sadly hundreds of thousands of Jews in America who are technically uncircumcised. Thankfully, there is a relatively simple way to fix a non-kosher bris. (Anyone reading these words who is interested in more information on this topic should contact an Orthodox rabbi or mohel.) Through fulfilling the mitzvah of bris milah properly, a Jew officially becomes a member of Avrohom Avinu's family! *Good Shabbos Everyone.*

Two Inspiring Stories of The Rebbe of Riminov

Once a month, on the eve of Rosh Chodesh, it was the custom of Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Riminov to send out two supervisors to all the shops in town to see whether the weights & measures being used were correct. One of those sent on a

certain occasion was Reb Zvi Hirsch, his faithful attendant & disciple, who was later to succeed his Rebbe. Arriving with his partner at the store of a certain wealthy businessman, he found an undersized liquid measure. When Reb Zvi Hirsch rebuked him for his carelessness, the shopkeeper answered that it was not used for measuring. "But there is an explicit Halacha on the subject," said Reb Zvi Hirsch. "Chazal teach us that a man is forbidden to have an oversized or undersized measure in his house, even if it is used as a pail for garbage." The storekeeper's retort was brazen. Borrowing a phrase remembered from Nach, from Sefer Shmuel, he asked: "Is Shaul also one of the prophets?! Does our Reb Zvi Hirsch too go about laying down the Law?" In reaction to this, Reb Zvi Hirsch took the measure in hand & trampled on it. When he returned from his day's rounds & was asked by the Rebbe if everything was in order, Reb Zvi Hirsch concealed that incident, being afraid that the wrath of the Rebbe would be kindled against the arrogant offender. But Reb Menachem Mendel got to hear of the story from the man who accompanied him. He immediately instructed his Gabbai to announce that the townsmen should all assemble in the Shul to hear a Drasha, but though he was to knock with his cane on all the shutters according to custom, he was to ignore the house of that offender. The shopkeeper heard that the Rebbe was speaking on the subject of weights & measures, & realized that this whole tempest was brought about on his account. He went to the Synagogue of his own accord, & as a sign of contriteness removed his shoes in preparation for begging forgiveness of the Tzaddik. Reb Menachem Mendel promised to forgive him on condition that by way of a fine he undertakes to donate 50 gold coins to

charity. He also said to the storekeeper, “you say that my Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch doesn’t know to study? Who could say whether the Rosh Yeshivah of your heavenly academy would know to study as well as him?” But why, then, had the man gotten off with such a light fine? Before the storekeeper had yet come in for his punishment, the people in the synagogue noticed the lips of Rav Tzvi Hirsh whispering. So, they asked him, “What are you saying?” He said that he was praying for the storekeeper, that he should not be punished on his account, & so, already, before the man arrived, the story of the prayers of Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch had an effect Reb Menachem Mendel, & so he was appeased. A widow sought an audience with the Rebbe of Riminov, Reb Zvi Hirsch; she desperately sought the blessing of the Tzaddik that she would succeed in meeting someone to remarry soon. The Rebbe asked her some questions about her deceased. husband & his family, & also about her family, where was she from, from which family, & so forth. Upon hearing the family name & the name of the town, the Rebbe's eyes widened. He asked for the specific address of her childhood home, & he himself even provided a description of the house, which she confirmed. The Rebbe then rested his head in his hands, appearing to be lost in deep thought. Finally, he raised his eyes & said to her, "All right, I have for you a suggestion for a match. I recommend that you should marry...me!" The woman turned pale. The eyes of the Rebbe's attendant nearly popped out of his head. It was difficult to say who was more shocked. The woman, totally flustered, remained silent. "Please don't be afraid, or embarrassed" the Rebbe said to her gently. “If you say 'No' I won't hold it against you. I'll still try & help you." Now the woman was

blushing slightly. She opened & closed her mouth several times, hesitating, until finally she was able to speak. "Rebbe, if you are in favor of this proposal, then certainly I am too." The Tzaddik smiled. He turned to his attendant & told him to fetch drinks, cakes & call some of the elder Chassidim; they would celebrate the engagement right then. After the formal arrangements were completed, the Rebbe addressed the assembled group. "I know you are wondering about the suddenness of this engagement & the strangeness of the whole procedure. Let me explain." "My parents died when I was very young, & the community arranged for me to be apprenticed to a tailor. One of my jobs was to make all his deliveries of new & mended clothes, which were always done on Fridays. Of all the families I regularly delivered to, there was only one that always paid promptly, instead of deferring it. This was a family with many children, so they often had items to be repaired. Whenever I would arrive there past midday, the house would already be completely prepared for Shabbos, right down to the flask of wine on the white-covered table. And the father of the home would be sitting serenely, reviewing the weekly Parsha in the traditional manner. Even if it was just past noon, the spirit of Shabbos was already pervasive in that house. I was always amazed & impressed. "I used to pray that when my time came, that I should have the good fortune to marry someone from that family or in another such family where the Shabbos was honored in such exemplary fashion. When this good woman revealed to me her background, I realized that she had grown up in that very house! Indeed, she is the daughter of that man whom I admired so much. I understood that her presence before me was an indication, that all

the way back then my prayers had been accepted. Now I can merit marrying a wife who truly knows how to prepare for & honor the holy Shabbos." Although Rebbe Zvi Hirsh was well into his sixties at the time of the wedding, the couple had two children. It is also known that the Riminover acted towards his much younger wife with great honor & respect. When he passed away, his widow subsequently remarried Rebbe Yisroel of Ruzin, also a widower, who acted as a father for her young children. *Rabbi Dovid Caro's Inspired by a Story.*

The Rebbe of Oshpitzin's Special Letter By Yehuda Z Klitnick

In a town in Prussia, a butcher came to buy cattle. He noticed his friend Reb Michel Brauer, was weeping. The butcher's had long known him as a man of wealth & standing. He called him aside & asked what had happened. Reb Michel poured out his heart: "You know that for 18 years I have lived in a big house in Gleiwitz. I did very well there & made a great deal of money. But a certain nobleman was jealous of me, & at every auction he kept raising the price of the house by several hundred. Still, I held on to it, because the judges liked me & kept granting me the license. Now the house has been sold for a huge sum. I begged the new owner to lease me the house as before, & he refused. I sent many friends to plead with him, & nothing helped. "Then I heard of another house for lease. I hurried there, leased it, & already put down a large deposit. Now I have found out that everyone who held it before me lost all their money & had to abandon the house. People tell me I am better off losing the deposit, rather than losing everything I have. I simply do not know what to do." When the

butcher heard this, he showed Reb Michel his hand, told him the whole story, how Reb Berish Frumer the Rebbe of Oshpitzin -Auschwitz- healed it miraculously, & urged him to travel to him. "I know there are tzaddikim in Poland who can work great wonders," Reb Michel answered. "But how can I go? The people of my town will hear of it, & I will be a laughingstock in their eyes." "Don't you have servants?" said the butcher. "Send a pidyon with a gentile servant in a sealed letter, & no one will know." So, he did. Since he could not write in Lashon Kodesh, he wrote the letter in German, told the whole story, & signed it "Michel Brauer of Gleiwitz." Reb Berish wrote back: "I have duly received your letter with the pidyon. The house you leased is no place to earn a living. If you can arrange to get your deposit back, good. If not, let the deposit go. But the house where you have lived, you will continue to live in. As for what you write, that he refused to lease it to you, I promise you that he will lease you the house. “This is what you should do. Go to him, & perhaps he will not speak to you at all. Go again on the second day, & he will speak with you, neither yes nor no, & he will waver. On the third day, take a stamped contract paper under your coat, & when he sees you that third day, he will lease you the house on whatever terms you wish. “Do not wonder that I write words that sound like prophecy. Know that I am no navi, nor the son of a navi. It is only that my master & teacher, the Rav & Gaon of Kshaniv, promised me that whatever comes out of my mouth, Hashem will fulfill. It is not my own." When the messenger arrived with the letter, Reb Michel could not read it, so he brought it to the local rabbi. The rabbi began to mock, & called out, "Polish papers!" Reb Michel was deeply ashamed. He took back the letter

& left, humiliated. The rabbi went straight to the marketplace, gathered a crowd, told them all about the letter, & they all had a good laugh. Now, in Gleiwitz they cast iron pots, & Krakow was then a free city where all kinds of goods could be brought in, & the same went for Kshaniv. Living there was a trusted agent of all the merchants, who sent each of them whatever they wanted, while they shipped their iron wares to him. His name was Reb Dovid Leib, a chosid, of Reb Berish. Reb Dovid Leib heard that Reb Michel had received a letter from Reb Berish & that the whole town was mocking him because of the local rabbi. He hurried to Reb Michel to see the letter. When he read it, he was overjoyed & made a "Shehecheyanu". "How long I have been waiting for this," he said, "for the name of Reb Berish to become known!" He told Reb Michel: "Set your heart at ease. Not one word Reb Berish wrote will fall to the ground. And afterward, I will make a laughingstock of your rabbi. I'll go with you to the nobleman myself." And it happened just as he said. On the first day, the nobleman had the door shut in his face. On the 2nd day, he spoke with him a little & told him to come back the next day: On the third day, Reb Michel brought along the stamped paper & the nobleman received him warmly & leased him everything on his terms. Reb Dovid Leib took the contract to the local rabbi & gave him a few sharp words of rebuke for embarrassing a big Tzaddik:. Then he went to the marketplace, told everyone what had happened, & showed them that just as the Rebbe decreed, so it came to pass. The rabbi was deeply humiliated. He asked Reb Michel to travel with him to Oshpitzin to beg forgiveness Another wealthy man went along with them, & they stayed in Oshpitzin for two days to hear his holy words. From then on, people

came to him from Prussia every single day, & he showed great & awesome wonders.
Pardes Yehuda.

Choose: Table or Shelf From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

A Rav [a level higher than 'Rabbi'] in Bnei Brak who goes to a nearby city every Erev Shabbos [Friday] to answer halachic [Torah Law] questions in the beit din [rabbinical court] of the community, always travels there by taxi. One week, his taxi driver turned out to be a new ba'al teshuvah ['returnee' to mitzvah observance], & he was listening to a religious radio station. The Rav liked to use this time in a car to study Torah, but the radio disturbed his concentration. He thought to ask the taxi driver to turn it off, but then he figured that the newly religious driver might benefit from or even be inspired by the encouraging words of the program, so he decided not to ask him to turn off the radio. He heard a listener call in, & say, "Today is the 24th of the Jewish month of Tevet, which is the yahrtzeit of the tzadik [holy man], Rebbe Moshe-Mordechai of Lelov. Therefore, in honor of the occasion, I want to share a wonderful story of his ruach hakodesh ['Divine inspiration'] & his superb middos tovos [good character traits] that I heard with my own ears & saw with my own eyes." When the Rav heard this introduction, he put down his sefer [Torah book] & focused on what the person was saying. The man began. "Once, when I was still a student in yeshiva, I & a few other students went to Rebbe Moshe Mordechai's Shabbat Friday night tish ['open table' -- at the end of a Shabbat or Festival meal]. After a while a man entered & remained near the door; he was someone who never before. had come to Lelov, a regular there told me. Immediately the Rebbe signaled to the surprise

visitor to approach him. When he did so, the Rebbe whispered something in the man's ear. The man nodded, turned away & rushed outside. "My friends & I wanted to know what this was all about, so we followed the man. We asked him to tell us what the Rebbe told him. He didn't want to say. But we persisted, & this is what he told us: "'My wife & I have a raging debate regarding where to light the Shabbos candles. I say that it is better to light them on a shelf in the dining room, while my wife wants to light the candles on the Shabbos table because that's what her mother does too. "'Every week, I prepare the candles on the shelf before I go to shul. And every week, she removes them from the shelf, places them on the table, & lights them there. It makes me very angry. "'This week, before I left, I told her that if I come home from shul & find the candles on the table, I won't make Kiddush, & I won't eat the Shabbat meal. "'Tonight, I came home & saw the lit candles on the table. I immediately left the house & went to a shul & opened one of the holy books. As I sat there, I heard joyous singing coming from Reb Moshe Mordechai of Lelov's tish. I decided to go there. Why should I remain by myself? "'The Rebbe immediately called me over & whispered in my ear. “The purpose of lighting the Shabbos candles is for the sake of peace. If you make a machlokes [quarrel] over it, the purpose is forfeited.” "'I am stunned by the Rebbe's ruach hakodesh. How did he know what I was thinking & exactly the answer I needed to hear? Before you stopped me, I was on my way to establish peace in my home.'" The taxi reached the destination, & the Rav left to go to the beis din. He was glad that he heard this inspirational story of ruach hakodesh, which teaches us to avoid quarrels & arguments. That day, as the Rav sat

in the beis din, a man came in, presented to him his dilemma & requested a clear halachic ruling. His words shocked the Rav: "I have a long-standing debate with my wife regarding where it's better to light the Shabbos candles. I say that it's better to light the candles on a shelf attached to the dining room wall, & my wife insists lighting the candles on the table, just like her mother does. What does your honor say? Where should we light the candles?" The Rav was astounded by this manifestation of hashgachah pratis [Divine Supervision] in our lives. It was the same question that he heard in the taxi! He told the man that he doesn't know any source in Jewish Law regarding where it is best to light the Shabbat candles, as long as they are placed where they can provide sufficient illumination for the Shabbat meal. Different communities have different customs. "However," he quickly added, "I do know that the purpose of Shabbos lights is for peace in the home, & therefore that factor should be considered primary & be given great consideration."

Q&A with Rav Avigdor Miller זצ"ל - *The Rebuke of Shimon & Levi*

Q: Why did Yaakov Avinu rebuke Shimon & Levi for killing the people in Shechem? Weren't they guilty? **A:** The people in Shechem deserved death because they were robbers. They robbed this girl. They refused to give her back. You see, it was only after that they killed the people in Shechem, it says, "they took Dinah, their sister, & they left." But before they killed them, they couldn't get their sister. They were holding her. And among goyim, if they're holding a person, it's like stealing. A ben Noach is chayav misah. So therefore they were justified. And nevertheless, Yaakov Avinu criticized Shimon & Levi bitterly. That's the question. The Mesillas Yesharim talks about the quality called chassidus.

Chassidus means to do something that's very righteous. Sometimes it's far beyond the obligation that the Torah requires. Such a man is a chassid. He's meschassed im Kono; he does more than is required for his Master. But there's a great danger there, the Mesillas Yesharim says. It's not enough to look at the deed that you're doing & see how good it is, how virtuous it is. You must judge it by its results. If the results are not good, then no matter how good the deed is, it's not chassidus. An example: Zecharyah ben Avkulus, just before the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash, didn't permit the Sages to put to death the dishonest men who had brought an offering from the king — they brought an offering from the king, but they put a blemish in the eye of this offering so that the kohanim couldn't accept the offering, & they intended to go back & tell the king that the Jews spurned the king's offering. That would cause trouble. But Zecharyah ben Avkulus said, "You must not accept the offering; and if you'll kill these men who are making this trouble, in order that they shouldn't go back & reveal that you spurned the offering, you'll establish a precedent that people might think anybody who makes a blemish on an offering should be put to death. It will cause a wrong precedent." Now, that's a midas chassidus. To look so far ahead & say, "If you'll do this & this, it might set a wrong precedent that matil mum bekadshim yehareg, anybody who makes a blemish on an offering should be put to death." So the Chachamim listened to him. But it was a fatal error. The Gemara says it was an error. And this Zecharyah ben Avkulus, this tzaddik, he's the one who destroyed the Beis Hamikdash with his piety. Because you have to look at the results! The results were they couldn't accept the offering. They couldn't accept it, but he couldn't kill the mosrim, & now the mosrim went back & told the government that the Jews refused your offering, & that caused trouble, great trouble; it was one of the catalysts of the churban Beis Hamikdash. Another

case: Gedalyah ben Achikam, the righteous governor of Yerushalayim who was left over after Nevuchadnetzar had exiled the entire people. They left over only the poor of the nation, the dalas ha'am, & Gedalyah ben Achikam, a righteous governor. Now, somebody came to this righteous governor & said that this & this man, Yishmael, is plotting to kill you. So the righteous Gedalyah said, "I don't accept any slander on a fellow Jew. It's lashon hara. I don't believe it." And the end was he was murdered by this man. Now, what happened when he was murdered? The Jews that remained were afraid of the wrath of the king of Bavel because they killed his appointed governor. Gedalyah was his governor that they appointed. So all the Jews that remained finally fled from Yehudah. And now Yehudah was desolate for many years. No Jews were there at all. If Gedalyah would have paid attention to the warning, he would have saved his life, & he could have saved that remnant that remained in the land. But because Gedalyah was a very big tzaddik, a chassid, he refused to listen to lashon hara, & therefore he was killed. Not only he was killed, but all the people with him were killed; in his court, all the officials were killed, & the rest of the people had to leave Yehudah because they were afraid of the melech Bavel. Now, it states there in the Tanach, kol ha'anashim asher hikah beyad Gedalyah, all the people that were slain by the hand of Gedalyah. Now, Gedalyah didn't kill anybody. He was killed himself. But the Gemara says that Gedalyah is blamed for killing all those people. Because he was such a big tzaddik, he refused to listen to the warning. So we see, if you're a big tzaddik but you bring trouble on other people because of your tzidkus, you're not a tzaddik. Gedalyah is blamed. And therefore, Shimon & Levi were justified in executing the people of Shechem. There's no question about it. But Yaakov said, "You're going to cause all the nations around to rise up against me. They'll unite against me & they'll destroy our family, & our

family, that's the hope of the world." And therefore he blamed them. The truth is that it would have happened so! Only it was veyehi chitas Elokim; Hashem sent a special fear on all the nations. But otherwise it would have happened. And therefore, no matter how good their intentions were, they committed a serious error in doing something that would have endangered the family. It's not enough to be righteous, but your righteousness has to have a good result. So the brothers were right, but Yaakov Avinu was more right. *December 1983*

The Fallen Sword

The great Kabbalist Rabbeinu Avraham Azulai zt"l, author of Chesed L'Avraham, was a descendant of a distinguished family of Torah scholars & Kabbalists who had been exiled from Spain & settled in Fez, Morocco. After enduring a difficult journey to Eretz Yisroel, during which he & his family miraculously survived a shipwreck, R' Avraham settled in Chevron, drawn by his deep longing to live near the resting places of the holy Avos in Mearas Hamachpelah. He devoted his life to Torah study & the hidden wisdom of Kabbalah. The Sefer Zichron Yerushalayim relates a remarkable story about R' Avraham & his extraordinary descent into the depths of the sacred cave. According to the account, a powerful pasha from Kusta once arrived in Chevron. It was customary for Arabs to visit Mearas Hamachpelah on Fridays, & the pasha joined the many visitors who came to the holy site. During his visit, he noticed the opening of the pit above the cave & became curious about what lay beneath it. He expressed a desire to descend & see the interior for himself. Those accompanying him immediately warned him that no human being dared enter the depths of the cave, which was regarded as an exceptionally sacred & mysterious

place. The pasha refused to accept their warnings. Determined to see what was inside, he removed the cover from the opening & leaned over the pit. As he did so, his sword slipped from its sheath & plunged into the depths of Mearas Hamachpelah. The sword was extraordinarily valuable, decorated with precious stones & pearls, & the pasha was desperate to recover it. He immediately ordered one of his servants to descend into the pit & retrieve the sword. A rope was lowered, & the servant was sent down. But almost as soon as he entered the cave, he lost his life. The pasha then ordered another servant to make the attempt, but he, too, perished. Additional servants were lowered, yet none returned alive. Some did not even reach the bottom before they suddenly died. The Machpelah, Cave of the Burial Place of the Avos & Imos (Patriarchs & Matriarchs) Seeing that he was losing his servants without recovering his treasured possession, the pasha became distressed. He exclaimed, "What shall I do? Must I lose all my servants?" Having exhausted his own men, he turned to the Jewish community of Chevron & demanded that one of them descend into the cave & retrieve his sword. The Jews of Chevron found themselves in an extremely difficult situation. They understood the terrible danger involved, but they also faced the demands of the powerful pasha. They therefore decided to cast lots to determine who would undertake the mission. The lot fell upon R' Avraham Azulai. When the righteous sage learned that he had been chosen, he accepted the outcome with remarkable composure. He prepared himself spiritually, immersed in the mikveh, & dressed in white garments. Throughout the night, the Jews of Chevron gathered around him as he spent the hours teaching them the secrets of the Torah &

revealing profound insights into the hidden wisdom of Kabbalah. When morning approached, R' Avraham rose & asked his friends to daven for him, beseeching Hashem that no harm should come to him. He then made his way to Mearas Hamachpelah. A rope was secured around him, & he began his descent into the mysterious depths of the cave. Once inside, he located the precious sword & attached it to a rope so that it could be raised to those waiting above. Having fulfilled the purpose of his mission, however, he did not immediately return. Instead, he continued walking through the interior of the cave where the neshamos of the holy Avos appeared to him there. He remained inside for several hours, experiencing something beyond the comprehension of those waiting above. Meanwhile, the Jews of Chevron grew increasingly anxious. Although the sword had been recovered, R' Avraham had not yet returned. Hour after hour passed, & they feared that he, too, had fallen victim to the mysterious danger that had claimed the lives of the pasha's servants. Finally, R' Avraham gave the agreed-upon signal, & those waiting above began pulling him out. When he emerged safely, the entire Jewish community rejoiced, grateful that the great tzaddik had returned alive from a place into which no one else had dared venture. But R' Avraham returned with an extraordinary message. He told them that during his time inside the cave, he had been shown from Heaven that his departure from this world was approaching. He had also been informed that he would enter Gan Eden & join the holy Avos. That night, R' Avraham spent the hours delivering profound teachings from the Pardes of Wisdom & revealing additional secrets of Torah & Kabbalah. When the first light of morning appeared, he

descended to the mikveh & immersed himself. He then emerged, dressed in white garments, & recited Krias Shema with complete purity & devotion. As he concluded, his holy neshamah departed from this world. His Torah teachings, continue to illuminate the wisdom of Kabbalah & inspire generations of Klal Yisrael.

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman's Torah Tavlin.

Here's My Story: The Overnight Shift at 770 **As Told By Dr. Ralph Silverman**

The day after the back-to-back holidays of Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah of 1977, I was in the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) of the Jacobi Medical Center in the middle of doing a cardiac procedure when my beeper went off. As I could not interrupt, I asked a nurse to respond on my behalf. She did & reported back that a Dr. Ira Weiss was urgently calling concerning the Lubavitcher Rebbe. When I spoke with Dr. Weiss myself, he told me that the Rebbe had suffered a heart attack on Shemini Atzeret, but refused to go to a hospital. The doctors present at the time insisted that the Rebbe could only receive the proper care in a hospital, & this set off a crisis. However, as Dr. Weiss explained to me, he had experience setting up home care for private patients & had flown in from Chicago to establish a mini CCU at 770, the Chabad Headquarters in Brooklyn. As part of this effort, he needed a cardiologist on site around the clock. Since I was then doing a cardiology fellowship, he thought I might be willing to pitch in for a night, which I agreed to do. 2 days later, on the night of Motzaei Shabbat, I arrived at 770 & was shown the setup, which was impressive. The Rebbe was resting in his office, & right outside

that room was a cardiac monitor which was being watched by a young man who never took his eyes off the screen. I could see the Rebbe was being monitored much more closely than he would have been in a hospital, & at that point it was easy to understand why he had chosen to remain in 770. There was also a great deal of medical equipment — literally, anything one could possibly want. And off to the side was a small room with a cot, where I could take a nap during my shift. I was not taken to see the Rebbe that night. My function was to be there solely in case something untoward happened. But the Rebbe's secretary Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky invited me to join him & a half-dozen others in a Malaveh Malka meal to which the Rebbe had sent a challah & a bottle of wine. They treated me with great respect & even sat me in an armchair at the head of the table. There's even a photo of that moment. The night passed without incident. In the morning, Dr. Louis Teichholz, who was then head of cardiology at Mount Sinai Hospital, arrived to examine the Rebbe, & he invited me to accompany him into the Rebbe's room. It seems the Rebbe had just woken up, but he looked good, his eyes were twinkling, & he expressed the desire to return to work the next day or, if not, then very soon. Now, this was just a few days after the Rebbe had suffered a major heart attack. His chart contained a very striking cardiogram in terms of the abnormality. This was not a minor episode — it involved the front wall of the heart, which has a lot of muscle — but he was stable, thank G-d. And he had a lot of questions about what had happened, most of which he directed to Dr. Teichholz & some to me. For example,

he asked me why, if he had this heart attack during the dancing of Shemini Atzeret, he was able to continue with the hakafot. (Indeed, as I later learned, in the middle of it, he finished all the hakafot & all the prayers & then went out to the sukkah to make kiddush.) I explained that a heart attack doesn't happen in an instant, because it is not a single, isolated event. It starts, progresses, & gets worse, but the person may not be affected right away. It was clear that the Rebbe was eager to get back to normal, & he said that he thought walking would be good for him, though he acknowledged that it would not be good for him to climb stairs. He said that, while walking, one does not have to overcome the gravitational pull, unlike climbing stairs, which adds to the stress on the body. This was an interesting observation, but Dr. Teichholz reminded him that at this stage rest was very important, & he needed to give himself several weeks to recuperate. He was not going to be able to return to his regular routine for a while, including holding public farbrengens, which he very much wanted to do. Another topic that came up was somewhat unusual & surprising — gene manipulation. Back then, this branch of science was very new, & there was a lot of talk about cloning & the like. The Rebbe expressed the opinion that we in the medical profession should let our representatives in Congress know how important it was that the US be at the forefront of this type of research. Because if the US does not take the lead, other bad actors will. I believe he was referring to the Soviet Union. His concern & insight impressed me. One might think that the Rebbe would be against gene manipulation, but he saw it from a

broader perspective. He correctly surmised that gene research would go on, & it was a matter of making sure good people were in control so it would not be misused. When this visit ended, so did my involvement, & I did not see the Rebbe for several years after that. Then, in 1987, I was invited to a gathering of the Machne Israel Development Fund, an annual meeting of donors to Chabad. The Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Groner, remembered me from the night that I spent there & reminded the Rebbe who I was. "And how do you find your patient now?" the Rebbe joked. "Thank G-d, the Rebbe looks wonderful," I said, because he did. He looked fully recovered & quite energetic. And then he added, still joking, "I am not paying for your visit here now." At the end of this brief conversation, the Rebbe gave me his blessing: "May G-d Almighty bless you to have good news. Go from strength to strength, & be of substantial help to all your patients. May you do so with good livelihood, with the aid of the Almighty." *Here's My Story [with the Lubavitcher Rebbe,] a project of The JEM FOUNDATION.*

Rabbi Meir Orlian's Business Halacha Institute – *Taking T'Urn*

The Rubin home was bustling with activity Friday afternoon. The family was expecting many guests for Shabbos, & Mrs. Rubin was busy putting the finishing touches on the preparations. Barely two hours before candle lighting, an unexpected problem arose. "The Shabbos urn isn't working!" Mr. Rubin announced, after trying unsuccessfully to turn it on. "But we must have hot water for Shabbos!" exclaimed Mrs. Rubin. "What do you suggest?" asked Mr. Rubin. Mrs. Rubin thought for a moment. "Our neighbors are away for Shabbos, but they left us their key," she said. "I happen to know that they have an unopened urn in

their storage closet. I'll call & ask if we can take it now & replace it after Shabbos." However, there was no answer. "I actually have access to Mr. Halperin's appliance store in the commercial center I supervise down the block," Mr. Rubin said. "He's closed already, but perhaps he'll let me take an urn." He tried calling Mr. Halperin, but there was no answer. "Perhaps we could just take the urn from the store & pay for it after Shabbos," Mrs. Rubin suggested. "Or take our neighbors' spare one & replace it afterward. Surely, they wouldn't mind helping us out." Mr. Rubin wrinkled his brow. "I'm not sure," he said. "You know well that taking something without permission is like stealing. Our desperate need for Shabbos shouldn't change that." He decided to consult Rabbi Dayan, though, & asked: "Can I take an urn from the store or neighbor & pay or replace it after Shabbos?" "The Gemara (B.M. 61b) teaches that it is prohibited to steal even with intent to pay double, & thereby benefit the owner," replied Rabbi Dayan. "The very act of unlawful taking is prohibited" (C.M. 348:1). Similarly, the Gemara (B.K. 60b) teaches that one may not take another's item with intent to compensate the owner with a more valuable item (C.M. 359:2). However, Rosh (B.K. 6:12) qualifies that this applies only if the alternate item is not currently available; some explain, since the person may not be able to pay later (Sma 359:6). However, if the more valuable item is available, & the person grants it to the owner through a third party, it is permissible to take the lesser item, based on the principle of zachin l'adam shelo b'fanav – we benefit a person not in his presence. Tur (C.M. 359) adds that this applies only when it is a clear benefit for the owner, such as an item meant for sale, but not personal household items. Shulchan Aruch (C.M. 359:2) rules that it is prohibited to steal with intent to pay, but cites the Rosh's qualification, & requires granting the better item through a third party. The Acharonim add the Tur's limitation of an item intended for

sale, & further note that if the owner is present & states that he prefers his own item, clearly one is not allowed to take it (Shach 359:4; Gra 359:3; Ketzos 359:1; Sma 359:8). Maharshal (Yam Shel Shlomo B.K. 6:27) & Taz (359:2), however, reject the presumption that a person is willing to part with his property for something more valuable. Maharshal therefore rejects the Rosh's qualification & writes that we only apply zachin when the person gains without an ensuing loss. Taz also concludes not to rely on the Rosh, unless in cases of great need, in which case we can further rely on the presumption that a person is pleased to fulfill a mitzvah (of chessed) with his property. Machaneh Ephraim (Hil. Gezeilah #5) & Beis Ephraim (C.M. #49) point to sources that indicate that it is permissible to take even with intent to pay later with cash or an identical item, when not causing the owner any loss. They suggest that the Rosh requires a zechus of greater value only when offering another item in exchange, like the case in the Gemara. "Returning to our case," concluded Rabbi Dayan, "following the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch you should not take from your neighbor, but can take from the store with intent to pay cash, especially for the mitzvah of oneg Shabbos. Ideally, you should grant payment beforehand to a third party on behalf of the storeowner" (see Pischei Choshen, Geneivah 1:8[19]). Verdict: Stealing is prohibited, even with intent to pay more. Nonetheless, Shulchan Aruch cites the Rosh & Tur who allow taking another's item intended for sale, when granting through a third party cash or an item of greater value, which is considered a zechus for the owner. Some Acharonim reject this opinion, though, so one should rely on it sparingly (Aruch Hashulchan 359:2).

ISRAEL NEWS SHTIGLITZ

Early detection of Alzheimer's - Israeli startup ALZAI Health has developed an AI model, based on medical records, to identify those at risk of Alzheimer's disease years

before any symptoms appear. It is based on research at Beilinson Hospital, together with Ariel University, & has completed validation in the U.S.

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