

The Jewish Weekly

It Once Happened..

Connecting the Dots

By Rabbi Chaim Mentz

South African emigration was at its peak and the Cohen family decided to leave as well, to make a fresh start in Israel. Mr. and Mrs. Cohen, and their only child, Batya, rented a townhouse in a heavily South African community in Israel, with its own community shul (synagogue).

Batya had just graduated high school so the timing for their move provided the opportunity for an exciting new beginning for her as well. Their joy was short lived when it was discovered that the headaches Batya was complaining about were due to a serious inoperable brain tumor. Within a short time she was gone, an only child, just 18 years old.

Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Cohen was diagnosed with leukemia. Still devastated from Batya's death, the situation seemed hopeless. Rabbi Levy, the rabbi serving the South African community in Israel, knew of my friend Esther and her work with energy healing, and he asked her if she would be willing to see Mrs. Cohen. Of course, she agreed.

Mrs. Cohen had been told that her only hope was a bone marrow transplant, but so far no match had been found. The best chance is a close blood relative, but Mrs. Cohen had none alive.

After working with her, Esther took her leave. She called Rabbi Levy and said that she felt that somehow, somewhere, there was a door remaining to be opened, but she didn't know what.

As soon as she hung up from Rabbi Levy, her cell phone rang. It was a friend who was in labor wanting to know if Esther could come and be with her. Luckily, the birthing center was right near the hospital where Esther had just visited Mrs. Cohen.

Esther had attended many births in this center, and so she was very friendly with the people who worked there. As she walked toward the nurses' station, she suddenly stopped. She saw a young pregnant woman, who said her name was Sara, checking in. Esther was taken aback by Sara's strong resemblance to Mrs. Cohen.

It crossed Esther's mind that perhaps this young woman might be a suitable bone marrow match and that maybe it was worth exploring after she finished helping her friend give birth.

The birth went smoothly, thank G-d. Afterwards, Esther asked about Sara. She was told that the couple had recently moved to Israel from South Africa. Esther asked the nurse to find out if they would mind if she approached Sara after the birth, about being a possible bone marrow donor for someone. The nurse came back saying they would not mind at all.

A few hours later, Sara gave birth to a baby girl. Soon after, Esther introduced herself to Sara and her husband and explained the bone marrow donation procedure. The young woman agreed to have the blood test, although she had just given birth!

The blood test was administered. Now late at night, on Esther's way home at last after a long day, her cell phone rang again. This time it was the blood technician who was excited to report a perfect match! "A match like this is usually only an immediate blood relative," he said in wonderment. Elated, Esther immediately called Mr. Cohen with the great news. That very night, procedures were begun for the transplant to take place.

A little while later, Sara called Esther to invite her to her daughter's baby naming. It would take place on Thursday morning in the South African community shul.

During the conversation, Esther discovered that Sara had recently lost both her parents in a road accident in South Africa, and this was one of the main reasons they had left. She was an only child and the memories in South Africa were too much for her. So they had moved to Israel. New country, new life, and now a new baby. Later that day, Esther met Mr. Cohen and told him about the baby naming.

Thursday morning both Esther and Mr. Cohen went to the baby naming. They were both taken aback when the baby's name was announced. Batya! As Mr. Cohen turned pale from the shock of hearing the baby's name, Sara stood up to explain to the assembled guests why they had named her that.

"I was adopted," said Sara. "I have always known it. I have always felt gratitude to my birth mother for giving me up for adoption instead of ending the pregnancy. My adoptive mother, who could not conceive a child, often told me that I was a gift from G-d. Now that I have my own child, I realize that all children are gifts from G-d. So we named our daughter Batya, "daughter of G-d." May G-d help us raise her to serve Him with all her heart."

The transplant was a complete success. Now the question begged to be answered. Who was this perfect match? Mrs. Cohen knew the answer. When she was a young girl of 16, before she was Torah observant, she had become pregnant. Over her parents' objections, she had wanted to have the baby and give it up for adoption to a Jewish couple.

At that time, an emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe had arrived in town. He was looking for students to come to his new seminary for girls with little Torah background. When he heard about the situation, he suggested that she study at the seminary while carrying her baby to term there. He also knew of a couple who desperately wanted to adopt a child.

Sara was this child, none other than Mrs. Cohen's own first child whom she had never seen before. Now this daughter had returned the gift of life to her own mother.

The family was now reunited and became very close. Sara recalls how she had worried that her baby would grow up without the love of grandparents. Mrs. Cohen recalls how she was sure that she would never experience the joy of holding a grandchild.

I call this story "Connecting the Dots" because it is a perfect example of how, though mostly we are unable to see the whole picture, sometimes G-d shows us that He is behind every detail. Nothing proves G-d's love for each of us like Divine Providence.

Reprinted from an email of chabadofbelair.org.

How to Thank the Nurses

By Rav Paysach Krohn

A Talmid of Rav Elya Svei, zt"l, had a child after seven years of marriage. His wife gave birth to a little boy who was born prematurely, and weighed just close to three pounds. The baby was placed in the High-Risk Unit of the Hodges Hospital in Milwaukee. After two and a half months, the family was told that their son was well enough to be taken home.

The Talmid wanted to buy the nurses a gift. Unsure of what would be appropriate, he called his Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Elya Svei, for advice. He was surprised when the Rosh Yeshivah said, "Don't buy a gift. Of course, you should show your appreciation. However, my advice is, every year on your son's birthday, bring him back to visit the unit."


That is exactly what the family did for the first six years. Over the next few years after that, there was always another reason for not going back. However, the year of their son's Bar Mitzvah, he came with a Bar Mitzvah invitation and handed it to the head nurse, along with a warm letter of gratitude. He thanked everyone profusely for what they had done years earlier, and he brought a special cake for the staff.

A few weeks later, the family received a beautiful letter from one of the nurses in that unit. The letter read: "My name is Jodi Campanella, and I am a nurse in the High-Risk Nursery at Hodges Hospital where your son had an extended stay years ago. While at orientation, I heard all about your son and your wonderful family.

"A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of meeting you when you brought an invitation to the Bar Mitzvah, along with a letter that you had written about our staff. It touched my heart. You reminded me of why I became a nurse in the intensive care unit. Candy and flowers are a nice sentiment, but what you and your family do is something that helps us make it through the rough days. My most sincere thanks, Jodi C., RN."

Rav Elya Svei taught that one does not have to show gratitude with lavish gifts. A sincere letter or a kind gesture is far more everlasting!

Reprinted from an email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.



YF GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times – Parshat Shemini

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:39	7:55	8:33
Tel Aviv	6:55	7:57	8:30
Haifa	6:47	7:57	8:33
Be'er Sheva	6:56	7:56	8:32

Slice of Life

Drowning in the Sea

By Chaya Miriam F.

I grew up in Long Beach, Long Island (New York). One day, when I was about six years old, in the early 50s, there was a heat wave. My mother was at work and my sister, who was a teenager, took me to the beach. There was a low tide that day. I remember seeing the barrels in the water and we were close to them because even near the barrels the water was shallow.

The water was very calm. I was sitting on a sandbar, building castles. Since it was so hot, my sister decided to get us both ice creams. There were many lifeguards at the beach and my sister asked the closest lifeguard if he would watch me for the few minutes that she would be gone. The lifeguard agreed and I continued to play without a care in the world, building my droopy sand castles with a shovel and pail. I was happy. What child wouldn't be? I was at the beach, playing in the sand, and my sister would be back in a few minutes with an ice cream!

Suddenly, the sandbar shifted. I was pulled into the water. I wasn't afraid, though. It seemed to me like a fun ride at the amusement park.

And then the lights went out. I saw in my mind's eye a farmer, chasing after animals. I shouted, "No, no. I don't like that." After all, he was harming the innocent animals and that wasn't nice! Looking back now I realize that the lights going out was due to a lack of oxygen and I was in danger of drowning. But at the time, I was not afraid. I was watching cartoons!

Before I knew it, the lights were on again. Above the water, I even let out a laugh before I was pulled back down under the water once more. This time, when the lights went out, I saw a man in a red suit with white hair and a white beard. "No, that's not my holiday," I said. "I don't want to watch this one."

I was pushed up to the surface again and then pulled back down once more. The third time, I saw a vision of a holy man. He was wearing what looked like some kind of white sheet. I had seen my grandfather wear something like that when he was at the synagogue. I was a little afraid, because I knew the man was a zeidy (grandpa) but he was not my zeidy.

The man spoke in English but with some Yiddish words. I knew a few Yiddish words from my zeidy. The man said, "Give me dein hentala now." ("Give me your hand now.") I didn't want to give the man my hand because he was a stranger and I had been taught not to talk to strangers.

Then the man spoke again, more insistently, "I am a Jew like you, give me dein hentala now." I obeyed and reached out my hand toward the man. At that moment, the lifeguard grabbed my hand which was above the water and pulled me out.

I don't know how much time passed because I went unconscious. But when I came to, the lifeguard was squeezing the ocean out of me.

I opened my eyes and there were a whole group of people, including my sister and a number of lifeguards, surrounding me. The lifeguard who had been pumping the water out of me, held up his fingers in front of my eyes and asked me how many fingers he had. I scolded him. "You're a life guard, you're supposed to know how many fingers you have!"

Then I saw my sister. The ice creams were dripping but I was glad to see her and the ice cream!

Now they turned their attention to my sister. How long had she been gone? How could she have left me all by myself?

My sister answered them angrily. "I left her with you," and she pointed to the lifeguard who had agreed to watch out for me. They questioned the lifeguard who admitted that he had seen me, but when he had looked in my direction I laughed, so he turned his attention to swimmers in the deeper area.

As memorable as the experience was at the time, I eventually forgot about it. Time passed. I married and had a little girl of my own. I was taking steps toward getting more involved in Jewish observance. My daughter attended public school and went to an afternoon Hebrew school.

One day, when I went to pick her up at the Hebrew School, I saw a flyer that said in big letters, "T.N.T." Underneath, it stated, "Torah Never Terminates: What are you doing with your child for the summer?"

The flyer shook me. It was advertising the Li Ohr day camp, run by the Yahadus Center, directed by Rabbi Sholom Ber and Frida Schapiro. The Center was established by N.C.F.J.E. under the auspices of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The camp was to be held at the local Young Israel synagogue. I decided to enroll my daughter.

When I got to the synagogue, there were a number of other pamphlets from the Yahadus Center. I picked up a brochure and saw a picture of a rabbi praying in a tallit. I nearly fainted. The memory of what had taken place 30 years earlier passed before my eyes. The Lubavitcher Rebbe was the holy man, the zeidy, who had saved me when I was drowning as a child!

That day was the beginning of my involvement with the Rebbe and Chabad. With the help of a tutor over the summer, my daughter caught up enough in her Jewish studies to be able to attend the Hebrew Academy in the fall. We became close with the Schapiro family and with Mrs. Schapiro's parents, Rabbi Nissan and Necha Mindel.

There are many, many more stories to tell. But suffice it to say, today, I am the proud mother, grandmother and great-grandmother of, thank G-d, many children who observe Torah and mitzvot (commandments), thanks to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Reprinted from an email of L'ChaimWeekly.org.

המולד יהיה בליל שני, 30 דקות ו21 חלקים אחרי 8 בערב

ראש חדש אייר יהיה ביום שני ובוים שלישי
Rosh Chodesh Iyar will be Monday and Tuesday

Torah Compilations With Yossi

Parshat Shemini

What is a 'scribe' in Hebrew? It's 'סופר', but isn't that astonishing?

The word סופר literally means somebody who counts, so the scribe who writes a Torah scroll, is a person who counts numbers.

What's the connection?

The Talmud explains that it was so important for a סופר to know how many words and how many letters there are in a Torah scroll, so that they are able to determine, that they had not left anything out.

This is quite astonishing. In pre-computer times, the סופר knew how many words and how many letters there were in the entire Torah.

As a result, they were able to say, the Torah has an even number of words and the two middle words, are found in this week's Parsha of Shemini, Vayikra chapter 10, verse 16.

They are 'דרש דרש', which means 'Moshe enquired', he asked, he demanded to know what was happening.

From there we have the word 'דרשה' – a discourse.

I think that this is so powerful. What a message! What a teaching! Right at the heart of the Torah, the essence of it all is that we need to have an inquiring mind.

We need to be asking questions, we need to be demanding answers with regard to that which troubles us in life.

The Gemara Masechet Shabbat daf lamud tells us, that Hillel the elder, was famous for being a very sweet natured, calm and patient person, nobody ever saw Hillel in a rage.

So, two friends made a bet and one said to the other, I bet you that I will make Hillel angry.

So how did he do this? He posed ridiculous questions to Hillel, such as, 'Why do the Tarmudians have oddly shaped eyes?' 'Why do the Babylonians have oval shaped heads?'

Hillel's answer to every question was 'שאלה גדולה שאלת' – you have asked a great question, and he went on to give an answer, nothing was going to upset Hillel.

The man lost his bet, and the Talmud tells us as a result of this anecdote, that this is the reason we follow the Halachic decisions of Hillel, and not of Shamai, because, he was a person who loved questions, he appreciated an opportunity to explain, regardless of how great or poor the questions were.

From the middle of the Torah, let us never forget not to be shy about asking and indeed, that's a message of Pirkei Avot, which tells us 'לא הביישן למד' – a shy student will never do well.

Let's 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.

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 17
MITZVOT ASEH: 6
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 11

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 91
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1238
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 4670

HAFTORA:
Ashkenazim: Shmuel II, 6:1 - 7:17
Chabad & Sephardim: Shmuel II, 6:1 - 19

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Iyar which falls on Monday and Tuesday, April 28 & 29.

This Shabbat afternoon we begin the weekly study of Pirkei Avot, every Shabbat until Rosh Hashana. This week we study Chapter 1.



To subscribe to THE JEWISH WEEKLY or to dedicate a month, please contact us by email: editor@thejewishweekly.org or www.thejewishweekly.org