

# The Torah Any Times

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## Rabbi Yoel Gold

### What Would Shlomie Do?

I have a friend, Jeremy, who lives in Chicago. Over the course of several weeks, he decided to pick up the biography of Shlomie Gross, titled "Shloime!" and give it a read. Every evening, for a few minutes, he'd read a couple pages before turning out the lights. Eventually, he reached the closing words of the book: "The next time you are presented with the opportunity to do chesed, think to yourself, 'What would Shlomie do?'" Those are the final, partings words of the biography.

That evening, after finally finishing Shlomie's story that made for a very moving and inspiring read, Jeremy turned off the light and began fading into a night's sleep. But then, just a few minutes later, his phone rang. It was much later that he'd be expecting a call, but Jeremy answered. A Belzer chassid, R' Pinchos Lerner, was on the line.

Living in Boro Park, R' Pinchos Lerner collects funds in support of the Belzer institutions. "Reb Jeremy, I'm in Chicago. Would I be able to come by?" Jeremy, a successful man, was wont to see people who were in financial need once a week at his office. But not usually at his house, and not this late at night. Jeremy began thinking through the request. "I can give him my office phone number and he can call and arrange for an appointment..." But then Jeremy had a second thought.

"I just read those final words,

'What would Shlomie do?' If I were Shlomie, he'd get out of bed, put on some clothes, make the man some hot tea, and write out a nice check." So instead of keeping off the lights, Shlomie turned them on and pushed himself out of bed. Fifteen minutes later, he was sitting down with R' Pinchos Lerner over a cup of tea.

After talking for a while, R' Lerner asked Jeremy if he would be able to help out at this time. Jeremy anticipated this, and excused himself for a few minutes, after which he returned with a check in hand. It was for \$26,000.

"You know," Jeremy began, "I just finished reading a book and the last line prompted the reader to ask themselves, 'If you were Shlomie, what would Shlomie do?' Thinking about that, I want to give you a generous, special amount." R' Lerner was gracious at Jeremy's largess. But he had something else to say. "Jeremy, we need more. \$26,000 is not enough. Can I ask you, please, to double it?" Jeremy could do the math. Double was a lot of money. "I was going to give you \$26,000; you want \$52,000?" Here, Jeremy had gotten out of bed late for R' Lerner, given him an overly generous check, and what's being asked of him is to double the amount!

"But what would Shloime do?" The question nagged at Jeremy, ringing inside him over and over. "You know what," Jeremy eventually said, "let me think about it. I'll look a little more into the Belzer institutions and

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give it some thought. Come back tomorrow and we'll talk." At that, R' Lerner stood up and left for the night.

The following day, Jeremy headed to his office and reviewed his financial portfolio. Thank G-d, he was doing well. He then researched a bit more about what was currently happening in the Belzer world and what R' Lerner was up to. And as he had said, later that night, he sat down with R' Lerner once again. This time, though, Jeremy decided differently. Before R' Lerner's disbelieving eyes, he wrote out a check.

Before handing it to R' Lerner, Jeremy repeated once more what he had said the day before. "I was going to give you \$26,000, but I just finished reading this book 'Shlomie!' And at the very end, the book closes

by prompting, 'Always ask yourself, 'What would Shlomie do?' Because of that, I'm giving you another \$26,000. Here's \$52,000."

R' Lerner thanked him very much and then turned to leave. An hour later, R' Lerner called back. "Jeremy, can I talk to you for two minutes?" "Yeah, of course," Jeremy said. "I came home thinking about Shlomie Gross. He and I were very close. And before he passed away, I actually went to his office and asked him for tzedakah for the Belzer institutions. You know how much Shlomie pledged, although he couldn't pay it because he passed away? I have it here in my book. \$26,000. You wanted to give \$26,000 and I asked you for double. Then you said that the other \$26,000 you are giving is because of Shlomie Gross. You should know that Shlomie him-

self had actually pledged \$26,000. It's quite literal then when you said that the other \$26,000 was 'because of Shlomie Gross.'"

One week, I published this story in Ami Magazine. That following Saturday night, I checked my phone and noticed a text from three hours earlier. It had been sent from someone on the east coast. It was from Mimi Gross, Shlomie's wife. "Rabbi Gold, you wrote the story about my husband this week. Thank you so much. I'm just wondering why you chose this week of all other weeks? Did you know that this Monday is my husband's yaartzeit?"

In capital letters, I wrote back, "I HAD NO IDEA."

And it's true. I had no idea. Only G-d did.

## Rabbi Yaakov Rahimi

### Life-Saving Blessings

A religious couples' retreat was being held near the Dead Sea in Israel. It was a spectacular venue, featuring an array of inspiring speakers and relaxing amenities. For one attending couple, this was a particular treat. With twelve children and living in a small, two-bedroom apartment in Har Nof, the getaway was an extremely rare and unusual outing.

Friday night rolled around, and the attendees took their seats across the dining room for the meal. But that's when the question arose. The husband, conscious of guarding his eyes, was less than keen on surrounding himself with men and woman, scattered around in a mixed seating arrangement. His wife, understanding of her husband, still preferred if they'd be able to remain seated downstairs in the main dining

room instead of isolating themselves in their hotel room upstairs and needing to haul the food there. They decided to pose the question to Rabbi Chaim Zaid, who was in attendance.

Strictly speaking, he advised, the man would be able to lower his gaze and avert looking at anything he didn't want to. That way, he'd be able to provide his wife with a more relaxed evening and not compromise on any halacha. "By the same token," continued Rabbi Zaid, "let me tell you a rule I learned from my rebbe, Rabbi David Abuchatzaira. He told me that any time in life you have a nisayon (test) and you need to push yourself out of your comfort zone to overcome it, Hashem in Heaven is ready to give you a pool of beracha (blessings). He is just waiting for the small opening to be created through your small measure of mesirut nefesh (self-sacrifice), and with that, bountiful blessing will pour forth." Hearing this, both the

husband and wife were convinced to move several flights upstairs to their hotel room.

The dining hall was located in the basement of the hotel, with their room seven flights upstairs. This translated into both husband and wife needing to make the tiring trip up with whatever food they wanted.

But then it happened. As the wife made her way down the hallway to their room, she heard a scream. It wasn't a familiar sound; it wasn't her husband. It was coming from a nearby building. A man was screaming for help, desperately. Immediately, the husband and wife followed the trail of noise and arrived at the man's room. He had been coughing and was covered in a pool of blood. Hatzalah was immediately phoned and a helicopter called to the site to airlift the man to the local hospital in Beer Sheva. Thank G-d, he was given immediate medical attention and survived.

The husband and wife had been the only ones around at that time. Had

they not, who knows who would have heard the cries of the man and who knows if he would have survived.

After recuperating, the man came to understand just who this couple was that saved him. He inquired and inquired until he figured out why they had decided to eat upstairs in their room instead of the dining hall, where they were when he was screaming, and who their family included. And then he called Rabbi Chaim Zaid.

“I heard what happened and I understand that with your input, the couple who saved me decided to eat upstairs in their room instead of downstairs. I’d like to ask you something. I have one son who lives abroad and is extremely wealthy without any need for money. But I

have an apartment in Har Nof that I haven’t been sure what to do with since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic. It’s a six-bedroom apartment worth a few million. Is it tzedakah if I would give it to this couple?” “Of course it is,” said Rabbi Zaid. “They have twelve children and are living in tight quarters in a two-bedroom apartment. They’re poor and things are very difficult for them. If you would be able to assist them, it would be a very generous display of tzedakah.”

The man transferred ownership of the Har Nof apartment to this couple without any other questions.

When I spoke to Rabbi Zaid about this, he told me, “I just came back from the Chanukat HaBayit (home dedication) this couple just made, and it’s absolutely true. They really

do own the apartment entirely, legally.”

It might be hard to believe, but when we follow Hashem’s word, especially when it’s hard, we open the channels for extraordinary blessing. One day this husband and wife were struggling with a large family in a tiny apartment, and the next day they were blessed with a beautiful house.

Don’t look at your struggles as homework. They are opportunities for blessing. Hashem is giving you many chances to overcome difficulties in your life, and they are no less than golden opportunities. When they’re viewed from that vantage point, they are embraced as vistas for breakthrough and we look forward to them instead of away from them.

## Rabbi Avi Slansky

### Opening Day

The name of the Parsha—Shemini—is quite unique. The inaugural day wherein the Mishkan would finally be introduced into full use had arrived, and its intended purpose would be realized. The previous seven days were days of initiation, comprised of Moshe Rabbeinu preparing for the culminating experience of Aharon HaKohen offering sacrifices as a Kohen, Hashem’s presence filling the Mishkan, and the Jewish nation beholding the awe-inspiring sight. However, with the demise of Nadav and Avihu, the day turned a slightly different route. It resulted in the heightened excitement being somewhat toned by a mood of mourning. Indeed, in the aftermath of his children’s passing, the Torah

tells us that Aharon remained “silent.”

All things considered, asks Rav Dovid Feinstein zt”l, why does the Torah call this day the “eighth day” when it should have been termed the “first day.” Why are the seven previous day of initiation, building up to the ultimate day when the Mishkan began to fully operate, counted and carried over? The seven days beforehand should be counted as exclusive days of preparation, and the day when the Mishkan would finally be put to use counted as a new, initial, first day.

But, in fact, Yiddishkeit teaches a different way of seeing the meaning and purpose of preparation. It is not detached and separate. It

is part and parcel of whatever the goal is. We can only arrive at the inaugural day if there has been days of preparation, of anticipation, of hard work. After Moshe Rabbeinu did everything as commanded— assembling and dismantling the Mishkan and offering daily sacrifices—was the Mishkan ready to be used. The “eighth” day was therefore opening day because opening day in all its pomp and grandeur is only what it is because of the preparation before. It doesn’t exist in a vacuum; it doesn’t gain definition based on its own singularity.

Such a perspective is critical to our lives as Jews. Rav Shimshon Pincus (She’arim B’tefillah) notes that the preparation before davening is codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 93:1) because it is critical to laying down the foun-

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dation to prayer. It is not something to simply roll over, as if it were dispensable.

Near the Parsha's' conclusion, the Torah states, "You shall sanctify yourselves and you will be holy" (Vayikra 11:44). The Kli Yakar explains the apparent redundancy in line with the dictum of Chazal (Shabbos 104a), "One who comes to purify himself is assisted from Heaven to do so." When we seek to sanctify ourselves, Hashem joins in our efforts and leads us to the resultant holiness.

Pairing together the beginning

and the end of the Parsha, a beautiful insight emerges. Our preparation toward sanctity is the very means that ensures it follows. When we appreciate the days of preparation toward our spiritual aspirations and goals and put in sincere effort to reach it, Hashem will help us get there. If, otherwise, the preparation is downgraded, viewed as something we can skip over or undervalue, we will be robbing ourselves of the siyata Dishmaya which helps us attain anything and everything in life.

Pesach is approaching in a matter of weeks. The Pesach Seder serves

as the majestic display of our appreciation for the miracles Hashem performed in bringing us from slavery to freedom. But a necessary requirement is preparation. Why is it so critical? Because to the extent that we prepare, we open ourselves to accessing the maximum siyata dishmaya inherent to this Yom Tov. When we build into the experience of the Pesach Seder our own days of initiation and preparation, we ready ourselves to gain the most from the "eighth day," with all its spiritual opportunity and elevation.

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## Mr. Charlie Harary

### The Little Things

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Back when I was in law school, there was a period of time when I was trying to arrange my schedule so I'd only need to attend classes on Wednesday and Thursday. It wasn't a simple matter, and it took me weeks to figure out how I could possibly do so. As time wore on, I found myself davening to Hashem that my last class fit in so that I'd only need to show up twice a week.

One day, I went to my rebbe and said, "Can I ask you a question? People are sick and dying, and others are facing really difficult situations, and yet when I come to Shema Koleinu in Shemonah Esrei, I notice myself asking G-d not for big things, but small, little things. I'm asking Him to help me get into a class so that I can cut back on my

hours and work needed for school." My rebbe looked back at me. "I don't think you understand how Hashem works." The advice he went on to give me was perspective shaping.

"Hashem is your mirror. If all you turn to Hashem for are the big things, then all He will get involved with are the big things. If you speak to Hashem about little things, He will get involved in little things. If you think Hashem is too important and too busy to worry about the little things in your life, He will mirror that back to you. He won't stand in a place you don't want Him. He will remove Himself from the little things in your life and only come around for the big things."

I was once on a conference call with several others, and one of the attendees was an Evangelical Christian. As

we were finishing the meeting, he said, "And we will close with the help of the L-rd Almighty." As soon as he said that, one of the other men on the call jumped in and said, "I'm sorry, but G-d has more important things to do than our little deal. How about curing cancer, world poverty, and climate change?" All I could think to myself was, "What a shame." In a second, you could have included Hashem in your business deal, and because you think He's too busy, you leave Him out. But is Hashem too busy? Is He limited like human beings are? When you remove Hashem from your life, you don't gain His presence in your life.

But if you do, He'll always be there for you.



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GET INVOLVED!

# Bring Them Home!

## Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 18 Adar II)

רון בן חנה (בנימין)	מישל בן סולמירה (ניסנבאום)	אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)	אבינתן בן דיצה (תרצה (אור)
שגב בן גלית (כלפון)	מקסים בן טלה (הרקין)	בר אברהם בן ג'וליה (קופרשטיין)	אביתר בן גליה (דוד)
שגיא בן נעמית (חן דקל)	מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)	גד משה בן שרה (מוזס)	אברהם גלעד בן אמונה (מונדר)
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)	מתן בן ירדנה (צנגאוקר)	גי'א בן מירב (גלבוע דלאל)	אגם בת מירב (ברגר)
שלומי בן רוזיטה (אירה (זיו))	נדב בן חנה (פופלוול)	גלי בן טליה (ברמן)	אוהד בן אסתר (בן) עמי)
שלמה בן מרסיל (מנצור)	נועה בת ליאורה (ארגמני)	דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)	אוהד בן אסתר (יהלומי)
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)	נמרוד בן ויקי (כהן)	דולב בן יעל (יהוד) דורון בת סימונה שרה (שטיינברכר)	אור בן גאולה (לוי) אורי בן עינב אפרת (דנינו)
	נעמה בת איילת (לוי)	דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבוע)	איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)
	עדן בת שרית (ירושלמי)	דרור בן דורית (אור)	איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)
	עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)	הירש בן רחל (גולדברג פולין)	אלון בן עידיית (אהל)
	עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)	זיו בן טליה (ברמן)	אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)
	עומר בן שלי (שם) (טוב)	חיים בן נחמה (פרי)	אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)
	עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה)	חן חנן בן ורד (יבלונקה)	אליקים שלמה בן אבישג (ליבמן)
	עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)	טל בן ניצה (שוהם) קורנגולד)	אלכסנדר בן אוקסנה (לובנוב)
	עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)	יאיר בן רות אדית (הורן)	אלכסנדר ששה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)
	עידן בן דלית (שתיווי)	יגב בן אסתר (בוכשטב)	אלכסנדר בן נינה (דנציג)
	עמירם בן שרה (קופר)	יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)	אלמוג בן אורית (מאיר ג'אן)
	עמית אסתר חיה בת אילנה אלין (בוסקילה)	יורם בן בלה (מצגר)	אלמוג בן נירה (סרוסי)
	עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)	יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)	אלעד בן חנה (קציר)
	צחי בן דבורה (עידן)	יצחק בן גילה (גלרנטר)	אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)
	קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)	ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)	אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי)
	קרניה בת אירנה (ארייב)	כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)	אנדריי בן יבגניה (קוזלוב)
	רום בן תמר (ברסלבסקי)	כרמל בת כנרת (גת)	ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)
	רומי בת מירב (גונן)	ליאור בן מיכל (רודאיף)	אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
		לירי בת שירה (אלבג)	

# *Bring Them Home!*

## *Names of Hostages in Gaza*

*(Updated: 18 Adar II)*

Omer Maxim ben Orna Esther (Neutra)	Yegev ben Esther (Buchachev)	Amelia Tehilla bat Amanda Francis (Damari)	Avinatan ben Ditza Tirtza (Ohr)
Ofer ben Kochva (Kaldron)	Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ohana)	Andrea ben Yavrania (Kosolov)	Evyatar ben Galya (David)
Idan ben Yael (Alexander)	Yoram ben Belah (Metzger)	Arbel bat Yael (Yehud)	Avraham Gilad ben Emunah (Mundar)
Idan ben Dalit (Stevey)	Yitzchak ben Enta Chana (Algert)	Ariel ben Sylvia Monika (Kunyo)	Agam bat Meirav (Berger)
Amiram ben Sarah (Cooper)	Yitzchak ben Gila (Gelernter)	Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas)	Ohad ben Esther (Ben- Ami)
Amit Esther Chaya bat Ilana Allen (Buskila)	Yarden ben Penina (Bibas)	Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein)	Ohad ben Esther (Yahalomi)
Omri ben Esther Verah (Miran)	Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas)	Gad Moshe ben Sarah (Muzas)	Ohr ben Geula (Levi)
Tzachi ben Devorah (Idan)	Karmel ben Kineret (Gat)	Guy ben Meirav (Galboa Dalial)	Ori ben Inav Efrat (Danino)
Kityah Shmuel ben Galdis (Segal)	Lior ben Michal (Rudaeff)	Gali ben Talya (Berman)	Eitan ben Ruth Adit (Horen)
Kreina bat Irana (Iriv)	Liri bat Shirah (Elbag)	David ben Sylvia Monika (Kunyo)	Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor)
Rum ben Tamar (Borsalevsky)	Mishel ben Solmirah (Nissenbaum)	David ben Sylvia Monika (Kunyo)	Alon ben Idit (Ohel)
Rumi bat Meirav (Gonan)	Maxim ben Tellah (Herkin)	Dolav ben Yael (Yehud)	Elya ben Siglit (Cohen)
Ron ben Chana (Benjamin)	Matan ben Anat (Angres)	Doron bat Simona Sarah (Steinbrecher)	Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi)
Segev ben Galit (Kalafon)	Matan ben Yardena (Zangauker)	Daniella bat Orli (Galboa)	Elyakim Shlomo ben Avishag (Liebman)
Sagi ben Naamit (Chen- Dekel)	Nadav ben Chana (Poppewell)	Dror ben Dorit (Ohr)	Alexander ben Uksana (Lobanov)
Shiri bat Margit (Bibas)	Noah ban Liora (Argamani)	Hirsch ben Perel Chana (Goldberg-Polin)	Alexander Sasha ben Yalena Leah (Tropnov)
Shlomi ben Rosita (Ziv)	Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen)	Ziv ben Talya (Berman)	Alexander ben Nina (Dantzig)
Shlomo ben Marcel (Mansour)	Naama ban Ayelet (Levi)	Chaim ben Nechama (Parry)	Almog ben Urit (Meir-Gan)
Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)	Eden bat Shirit (Yerushalmi)	Chen Chanan ben Vered (Yavlunka)	Almog ben Nira (Sarusi)
	Oded ben Bilhah (Lipschitz)	Tal ben Nitza (Shoham- Corngold)	Elad ben Chana (Ktzir)
	Omer ben Niva (Weinkraut)	Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen)	Elkana ben Ruchama (Bochbut)