

# The Torah Any Times

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*Dedicated in honor of the second yaartzeit of R' Zechariah Shimon ben Yitzchok HaKohen Wallerstein zt"l*

## Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein zt"l Missionary at the Market

When I used to devote part of my day to business, I sold plastic bags to a store in Bensonhurst, New York called Henry's Fish Market. The owner's name was Mike and he was Jewish, though not religious at all. However, he had a missionary who worked in his store. The problem was that this missionary kept on telling him that the Jewish religion is wrong and that if he doesn't believe in the Christian faith, he is holding back the Messiah and he won't find salvation. In a nutshell, he was nudging and bothering the Jewish owner with his missionary views and arguments.

At the time, I had just started my teaching career, and one day I received a call from Mike. "Rabbi," he said, "I don't know. Maybe this missionary is right and we're wrong. I'm all confused. Can you come in and have a discussion with him, and that'll help me determine which one of you is right. You'll debate, and whichever one of you wins the debate, that's how I'll continue to live my life." That was it. If the missionary's arguments would win out, he'd start acting as a Christian, and if my points would, he'd remain Jewish.

I was twenty-five at the time and I'd never had any debate with anyone. I knew that missionaries were generally very quick and witty and often went to school to become fluent with their methods and argu-

ments of persuasion. Against such a "well-trained" fellow, I didn't know if I stood a chance. "I don't know if I'm the right guy for this," I told Mike. But that defense didn't go far. "If you don't come," Mike said, "I'm going to have to side with the missionary. He said that if you don't want to debate him, it's because you know you're wrong and you're afraid to argue your points." At this point, I had no choice. I had to go.

Before I headed over one day to the store, I went to daven Mincha. I davened to Hashem that he should put the answers in my mouth. I had no training in how to debate a missionary, so all I could do was turn to Hashem for help.

When the time came, I entered the back room of the store, where Mike kept all the money. A couple minutes later, I walked the missionary, his face smooth and his demeanor calm. Compared to him, I looked very young. "You're a rabbi?" he asked. "No, I'm not a rabbi," I said. "I'm a teacher." "Oh, okay. Would you like me to go first in this debate or would you like to go first?" Now, I didn't know where to start. Never before had I done any of this. "No, no," I said. "You're older. You should start." So he began.

"G-d is this Being Who is above the world and everything physical, so He doesn't bother with this world. But He had a human son and that son is the Messiah, and he's the one who came to this world to do G-d's work.

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Miriam bat Yeshayahu  
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Chaya Raizel bat Dena  
Yerachmiel Eliyahu Ben Esther Riva  
Reuven ben Rochel

And the Jews who don't believe in him as the Messiah are preventing him from coming and saving us." The missionary went on with a few other points. When he was finished, I didn't know exactly what to say. I wasn't even clear what in specific I arguing against. I knew that it was blasphemous to believe that Hashem had a human son as they describe. If Hashem in fact had a son, why did He only have one?

So I replied with blunt honesty. "Look," I said, "I don't know your religion, but I do know that we Jews go to the owner of the store. If non-Jews have a problem with an item in the store, they talk to the manager. If we have a problem with something, we don't go to the manager. We ask, 'Who owns the store?' We go straight to the source, straight to the top; we don't deal with in-betweens. G-d owns the world and we go to Him for everything, and no one else." And then I went on.

"Look, Mike, listen to me. I never studied their religion and I'm no missionary. But let me tell you something. After one hundred and twenty years when you die, let's say they're right. They're not, but let's say they are. When you go up to Heaven, imagine their Messiah is standing there and says, 'Hey Mike! Why didn't you come to church? You never prayed to me! Things don't look so good for you now that you lived the life you did!' What would you say?" Mike didn't respond.

"I'll tell you what you'd say. Christians believe in the Ten Commandments. They all agree to the Old Testament. In the Ten Commandments, it says, 'Honor your Father.' So all you need to tell this Messiah is, 'You're right that I never went to church, but I went to synagogue, and instead of praying to you, I prayed to your father. Are you going to punish me for praying to your father? If you

do, then the Ten Commandments aren't true, and you yourself believe in them!'

"So Mike, you have nothing to worry about. If you do go to shul, you're going to the father. But," I went on, turning to the missionary, "if you're wrong, and you come to Heaven after one hundred and twenty years, and there is no son of G-d, then G-d will say to you, 'Who did you pray to? My son? I have a human son?'

"If we Jews are wrong, we're not really wrong, because we prayed to the father, but if they're wrong, they're in big trouble because they've been blasphemous toward G-d."

Hearing this, Mike was taken aback. "Wow!" he said. "That's pretty good!" The missionary who appeared so kind and sweet when he walked in suddenly started cursing me. Right there, on the spot, he got up and said, "I'm out! I'm never going to work here again!" And Mike said bye.

If at the last second you realize that you've been living your whole life wrong, that's a huge problem. When Yosef revealed to his brothers that he was Yosef and asked if his father was alive, his brothers realized that their whole perspective about Yosef had been wrong. And such a realization terrified them. It's critical that we live our lives aligned with the truth. And if you have questions, ask the right people.

In a similar vein, a boy once came to me and professed that he was an atheist. "I'll give you two choices," I said to him. "Let's say you're right that there is no G-d. So what will happen if you lived your life as a religious Jew and learned Torah, treated your wife right, and had kugel, kishke and matzo ball soup. And you kept Sukkos, Chanukah and Purim, and brought up your children correctly and had six hundred and thirteen mitzvos and never spoke badly about another person or looked at things you know you

shouldn't. You followed the Torah. And then you died and there's nothing. What did you lose? Nothing.

"But what if you live as an atheist and you don't believe in Hashem, and don't keep any of the mitzvos, and after one hundred and twenty years, you come to Heaven and the first thing you see is Hashem's Shechinah (Divine Presence). Uh-oh. Your whole life was a lie. "I have no gamble," I said to the boy. "I'm living a Jewish, Torah life. Even if there was no G-d, I would live this way because it's such a good life. And on top of that, I know that there's a G-d.

"So if I'm wrong, what am I missing? Baruch Hashem, I have a family, I go to daven, I learn, I do good things, I honor my parents, and one day a week I don't engage in any business. Look at all the Ten Commandments. Don't steal and don't be jealous. So you can have a great life with Hashem! But you," I carried on saying to the boy, "living life as an atheist and not keeping any of the Torah are in a much more vulnerable and compromised position. If you're right, okay, but if you're wrong, the repercussions will last for eternity. Why would you take that chance?" The boy understood.

In life, we might at times have trouble believing in G-d. But if ever we do, think ahead toward what will happen after life ends. Play out the scene in your mind. And then ask yourself if you should believe in G-d and follow the Torah.

At that point, I think we'll all have the right answer.

# Rabbi Yoel Gold

## Downstairs, Upstairs

Mark Handelman's flight was from O'Hare International in Chicago to LAX in Los Angeles. But as he arrived at the airport, he was met by a surprise. Besides there being a self-check-in for your boarding pass, there was also a scale where you could self-check-in your luggage too. You put your suitcase on the scale and it gives you a read-out of how much it weighs. If it's the right weight or slightly under, you're good to go. If the bag is overweight, you're charged an extra twenty-five dollars. From there, you drop your bag onto the conveyer belt, which transports it to the plane.

When Mark dropped his suitcase on the scale, the computer indicated that it was 52 pounds—two pounds overweight. He'd need to pay an extra twenty-five dollar fee. But what could he do? He couldn't negotiate with a computer. So he told himself that it was worth standing in line and negotiating with one of the employees behind the counter. Perhaps when speaking with a person, they'd waive the fee. Dragging his suitcase, he headed to the line and began to wait.

But the woman behind the desk was just as stern as the computer. "Sir, your bag is two pounds overweight. You'll need to pay a twenty-five-dollar fee." Mark's attempt to generate the woman's compassion fell flat, and there he was in the same spot he had been

just minutes before. So he did what he needed to do.

Opening his suitcase, Mark took out a few items—a pair of shoes and an undergarment—and slipped it into his backpack. He then placed the suitcase back on the scale.

It was now 50.5 pounds—still half a pound overweight. "You'll need to take something else out, sir," stated the woman behind the counter, her tone biting and icy. At this point, Mark began wishing he had stayed at the computer check-in.

Taking his suitcase off the scale again, this time he took out a pair of pants and a belt and stuffed them into his backpack. Now, the suitcase was 49 pounds. Mark could finally head upstairs.

When he arrived upstairs at the gate, he noticed a huge commotion. "What's going on?" he asked someone nearby. "The flight is overbooked, and they're looking for people to be bumped to a later flight." Mark, thinking to himself, started considering it. What were they offering? Making his way to the woman behind the counter, he inquired what he would get if he chose to fly the following morning instead of that night.

"You'll get \$500, extra leg room on your flight, and a free hotel tonight." To Mark's ears, it sounded well worth it. "Sign me up!" he said. "Okay, great," said the attendant, as she began typing in his information. "But just one thing... I need my suitcase for the night. Could I get it?" The at-

tendant raised her eyes from typing and looked at Mark. "Oh, your suitcase... Your suitcase is already on the plane. We'll save it for you at LAX in a private room, and when you get there, it'll be waiting for you. But I'm sorry, we won't be able to get it to you now. Is that a problem for you, sir?" Mark didn't like the answer. He needed a change of clothes.

And then it hit him.

No, he didn't. There had been someone downstairs who had given him a hard time. And he had to take out a pair of shoes, an undergarment, and a pair of pants and belt. He was good. "Actually," he said, with a relieved grin, "I'll be fine."

In this world downstairs, sometimes we go through a rough time. People give us a hard time, unfortunate and inexplicable things happen to us, and we have no idea why it all needed to take place. But the truth is, we just need to wait until we get upstairs, to Heaven, to discover why we needed to go through everything we did.

When we take note of the simple Hashgacha Pratis (Divine Providence) in our life, and we all have them, it's a different world.

Talk to Hashem. Look out for His hand. Because when you do, you'll start generating some feeling, some emotion, of wanting to be close to Him.

And He'll turn to you just the same.

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# Rabbi Shlomo Landau

## Down Bathurst

Thank you for reading this edition of The TorahAnyTimes Newsletter. If you've enjoyed, please let us know – we'd love to hear from you! Email [info@torahanytime.com](mailto:info@torahanytime.com).

This past Pesach, someone shared with me a story that they heard directly from the person involved.

A few weeks before Pesach, one random morning, one fellow decided to head to shul in Toronto and learn. It was the Agudah South on Bathurst in Toronto. He took a seat inside and opened a sefer.

Just a few minutes later, he heard a loud, frantic, panicking knock coming from the front of the shul. Opening the door, the man noticed a woman, beside herself. She looked rattled and in need of urgent help. Which she was.

"You got to help me. I'm from Oregon, and when I heard about the upcoming Solar Eclipse, I decided to come and view it in Niagara Falls alongside a million other people. While I was there, I remembered that I had an old uncle, a survivor, who was in an old age home somewhere in the Toronto area. If I'm here, I should probably go and visit him, I told myself. And I did. He was in Hamilton, Ontario.

"I came to the facility he was at, but I was told shocking news. He just passed away a few days ago. As we speak, he's in the morgue. Since there was no listed next of kin, and no one had come to claim familial ties, they plan on cremating him at the end of one week. I told the facility that they couldn't allow him to

be cremated because he's a Jew, and if there was no other kin to speak on his behalf, I would because I'm family! He needs to be buried in a Jewish cemetery with all the rites of Jewish burial. 'No problem,' they told me. If I could arrange for a burial, they'd be happy to release him. If not, they'd default to their original plans of cremation.

"I have no idea what to do though!" said the woman, distressed. "I'm not from around here, and I don't know how to go about arranging all the burial and funeral arrangements. And if I don't take care of it by the end of this week, they'll cremate him. Can you help?" Instantly, the man understood the urgency of the woman's request.

Now, how did the woman end up at the Agudah South of all places?

The woman wasn't from Toronto, but she did know that Toronto was a Jewish community, and she also knew that Jews help Jews. With those two pieces of information, she had everything she needed. Heading down Bathurst in a bus, and looking out the window, she passed by a shul which said on the left side of the building, "Kielcer Congregation." Kielce was a city in Poland, and over a hundred years ago, people who left from Poland to move to Toronto opened a shul called "Kielcer Congregation." Eventually, the old members of the shul faded and it was taken over by

the Agudath Israel, and became known as the Agudah South.

When she saw the words Kielcer Congregation, something registered inside her. Her uncle had originally been from Kielce, of all places. Maybe they can help, she figured. Knocking on the door, she was met by the man who had at random decided to take some time off that morning and head to shul to learn.

The necessary people were contacted to arrange for a Jewish burial, and as had been hoped for, the woman's uncle received a Jewish burial in accordance with halacha.

The man who opened the door that morning never learns at the Kielcer Congregation at that hour of the day. And this woman had only 'by chance' taken a bus down Bathurst and noticed the word Kielcer, which tipped her off.

When the rav of the Agudah South heard of this story, he added one factual tidbit. "We'd been thinking for many years of removing the words 'Kielcer Congregation' from the outside of the building, because there's really no one remaining from the earlier congregation. Agudah South is what everyone calls it. But we just never did. And now I know why we didn't. Hashem wanted this woman's uncle to receive his last honors of a Jewish burial, and these words needed to be on the building for that to happen."

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## Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein zt"l

### Precious Time

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The most precious commodity we all have is time. You can live without breathing for two minutes, you can live without eating for two minutes, and you can live without drinking for two minutes. Even love, there are many people who go through life

without feeling loved. But one thing a person cannot live without, for a minute, for a second, is time. When our time is up, we're not here anymore.

It's the greatest asset Hashem gave us. You woke up this morning and Hashem gave you the biggest present in the world. It doesn't make a differ-

ence what we are personally going through. If we have time, we can fix a lot of things because time is potential. Time is life. And when there's no time, there's no life.

So if you are breathing right now, thank Hashem. And make the most out of it right now.

# Bring Them Home!

## Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 1 Iyar)

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

# *Bring Them Home!*

## *Names of Hostages in Gaza*

*(Updated: 1 Iyar)*

Amit Esther	Yitzchak ben	Arbel bat Yael	Avinatan ben
Chaya bat Ilana	Gila	(Yehud)	Ditza Tirtza
Alin (Buskila)	(Gelerenter)	Ariel ben Sylvia	(Ohr)
Omri ben	Yarden ben	Monika (Konyo)	Evyatar ben
Esther Veronica	Penina (Bibas)	Ariel ben Shiri	Galya (David)
(Miran)	Kfir ben Shiri	(Bibas)	Avraham Gilad
Tzachi ben	(Bibas)	Bar Avraham	ben Emunah
Devorah (Idan)	Carmel bat	ben Julia	(Mondar)
Kieth Shmuel	Kineret (Gat)	(Cooperstein)	Agam bat
ben Gladis	Liri bat Shira	Gad Moshe	Meirav (Berger)
Chava (Segal)	(Elbag)	ben Sarah	Ohad ben
Karina bat	Mishel ben	(Mozes)	Esther (Ben-
Irena (Ariav)	Solamira	Guy ben Meirav	Ami)
Rom ben	(Nissenbaum)	(Gilboa Dalal)	Ohad ben
Tamar Noa	Maxim ben	Gali ben Talya	Esther
(Brasalevsky)	Talleh (Herkin)	(Berman)	(Yahalomi)
Romi bat	Matan ben Anat	David ben	Ohr ben Geula
Meirav (Gonen)	(Angrest)	Sylvia Monika	(Levi)
Ron ben Chana	Matan ben	(Konyo)	Ori ben Einav
(Binyamin)	Yardena	Dolev ben Yael	Efrat (Danino)
Segev ben	(Tzangauker)	(Yehud)	Eitan ben Ruth
Galit (Chalfon)	Nadav ben	Doron bat	Idit (Horen)
Sagi ben	Chana	Simona Sarah	Eitan Avraham
Naamit (Chen-	(Popplewell)	(Steinbrecher)	ben Efrat (Mor)
Dekel)	Noa bat Liora	Daniella bat	Alon ben Idit
Shiri bat Margit	(Argamani)	Orli (Gilboa)	(Ohel)
(Bibas)	Nimrod ben Viki	Hirsch ben	Eliya ben
Shlomi ben	(Cohen)	Perel Chana	Sigalit (Cohen)
Rosita Ira (Ziv)	Naama bat	(Goldberg-Polin)	Eliyahu ben
Shlomo ben	Ayelet (Levi)	Ziv ben Talya	Chana (Sharabi)
Marcelle	Eden bat Shirit	(Berman)	Alexander ben
(Mansour)	(Yerushalmi)	Chaim ben	Oksana
Tamir ben	Oded ben	Nechama	(Lubanov)
Cheirut	Bilhah (Lifschitz)	(Perry)	Alexander
(Nimrodi)	Omer ben Niva	Chen Chanan	Sasha ben
	(Venkrat)	ben Vered	Yelena Leah
	Omer ben	(Yablonka)	(Tropanov)
	Shelly	Tal ben Nitza	Alexander ben
	(Shemtov)	(Shoham-	Nina (Dantzig)
	Omer Maxim	Corngold)	Almog ben Orit
	ben Orna Esther	Yair ben Ruth	(Meir-Jan)
	(Neutra)	Idit (Horen)	Almog ben Nira
	Ofer ben	Yagev ben	(Sarusi)
	Cochava	Esther	Elkana ben
	(Kalderon)	(Buchashtev)	Ruchama
	Idan ben Yael	Yosef Chaim	(Buchbut)
	(Alexander)	ben Miriam	Emily Tehilla
	Idan ben Dalit	(Ochana)	bat Amanda
	(Shtivi)	Yoram ben	Francis
	Amiram ben	Bella (Metzger)	(Damari)
	Sarah (Cooper)	Yitzchak ben	Andrei ben
		Aneta Chana	Yevgenia
		(Elgarat)	(Kozalov)