

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi Joey Haber

The Trip that Taught Me

My flight was scheduled for Sunday evening at 6:40 p.m. to Manchester, England from JFK. I had been invited a few months before to speak at a conference of forty-five rebbetzins from twenty different cities and twelve different countries across Europe, and I accepted the offer.

A week before my departure, I was given the details of my speaking engagement. It would be a one-day conference, and I'd be tasked with speaking for 6 ½ hours. I'd go from 10:30 – 12:30, 13:30 – 15:00, 15:15 – 16:45, and 17:00 – 18:30. After getting this news, for the entire week before my trip, I couldn't stop complaining about how many hours I'd been asked to speak. Just about anyone I'd run into, I'd say, "Can you believe, I need to speak for 6.5 hours in one day!" I wasn't even sure who could listen to me for so long. All week long, I was going at it just about non-stop with how overwhelmed I was.

Nevertheless, I prepared as best as I could. I organized all my papers, arranged my thoughts, and set myself up to succeed. Besides this, I took care of making sure I had everything I needed to take from my home in Deal, New Jersey, including my passport and other traveling items. I left Deal at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, knowing that the trip to Brooklyn would

take about an hour and a half. As expected, I arrived in Brooklyn at around 3:00, and planned on calling a cab to take me to the airport at 3:30. But then I reached for my passport, and went pale.

I'd left my passport in Deal. And for the record, the person who brought it to Deal was none other than me. I couldn't even think to blame anyone else. At this point, I had no idea what I'd do. I slid into a cab, nonetheless, and started making my way to the airport. The best I could do was Uber my passport to the airport. The anticipated time it would arrive was 6:03. But 6:03 soon turned into 6:10, 6:11, 6:14. Already at the airport myself, I started talking to everyone I possibly could—TSA members, Clear, front desk assistants—to ensure I'd be able to board my flight. I was pacing back and forth, reminding both myself and the airport personnel that I needed to make the flight. I was told, unsympathetically and clearly: if I'd present my passport before 6:25, I'd be allowed on the plane.

The Uber was stuck in traffic, and soon it was 6:17. I stood outside in the blazing heat, craning my neck, hoping the Uber would arrive any second, so I could make a beeline for the terminal. At 6:25 on the dot, the Uber pulled up. I grabbed the passport and made a mad dash for it. When I arrived at the desk, I handed over my passport and took a long exhale.

"I'm sorry sir. The gate has already

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closed.” I sat down and felt like I was going to cry. My flights were on Virgin Airlines and Delta, though the ticket had been booked through Air France and on points, so quickly getting hold of a new flight wasn’t a simple solution.

All I could wrap my head around was, “What does Hashem want from me now?” Whenever something has gone wrong in my life, the question I ask myself is that: what is Hashem telling me? There I was, sitting in JFK at 6:45. My flight was in the air, and I was on the ground.

I knew that there were only a handful of flights to Manchester that I could get on, so my chances of recouping my loss and making it there were slim. At that point, I called my wife. “I know what Hashem is telling me,” I said. “Stop talking and stop complaining.” I had the opportunity to speak to others for 6 ½ hours, and I was whining? No one else wants to hear about it! Here they were flying me in to inspire others, and I was complaining? I had learned my lesson.

Sure enough, I called the travel agent who was already working away at finding another flight. “I got you another flight on Aer Lingus.” I had never heard of the airline before, but as I learned, it was the Irish flag carrier. It sounded to me like the minor league of planes, with some tucked-away terminal off the grid. But what could I do? My stopovers included Dublin and Ireland, with the final touchdown just minutes before I’d need to speak.

I wound up with a total of two hours of sleep overnight, and by the time I landed, all I could do was race to the conference venue. I ended up speaking for 5 ½ hours straight, with two ten-minute breaks.

They flew by like a breeze.

Following the full day of lectures, I headed out to daven, and then made

my way to the house I’d be staying at. On the way, I was told that I was originally supposed to stay at one home, which by its outward appearance and description was magnificent, but I ended up being taken to a smaller, modest home. Regardless, I figured I’d eat something quickly and then get a good night’s rest.

As I arrived at the door, the hostess opened and said to me without compunction: “Rabbi, I just want to tell you—I never heard of you. I never heard a class of yours and neither has my husband. Everyone else is telling me that it’s a big deal that we have you over, but I have no idea who you are, so I have no idea why.” In my mind’s eye, I looked up and could only wonder, “Hashem, where are we going with this?”

I proceeded to sit down at the table for dinner. At the head of the table was not seated the husband, but a ninety-five-year-old woman, who I learned was the hostess’ mother. “My mother went through Auschwitz.” I blinked. “Oh wow...” I said, quietly. Looking again, I could see the numbers on her arm. “She remained a frum, Torah Jew and she raised a religious family.” I sat still, moved to learn this. “I want to tell you something about my mother,” went on the hostess. “When she went to Auschwitz, immediately, her mother was killed. All of her siblings were killed. Her father was killed. And her grandmother was killed. But I want to tell you that in all the years since, she never talked about it and she never complained about it. In fact, my father passed away, and he never even heard the story. About fifteen years ago, my mother realized that there are people who could use inspiration, and she went to Auschwitz with a group of sixty college students. She ended up doing the same for many years in a row. She showed them the gas chambers, the barracks where she slept, and the rooms where

she worked.

“When it was time for it, she talked about it. But before then, she never said a word and never complained.”

I remained sitting there at the table, and started crying. The hostess looked up at me. “Why are you crying?” “I feel like Hashem is talking to me. I was just in JFK, missed my flight, and I called my wife and said, ‘My lesson is—stop talking and stop complaining.’”

Here was a woman who had lost everything in the Holocaust, literally, and she didn’t complain. She just moved on and built a Jewish family, a Torah home.

My hostess wasn’t done. “Aish HaTorah, in fact, made a movie about my mother, documenting her story.” I instantly put it on and began watching, my mind mesmerized. One by one, the movie displayed well-known pictures from the Holocaust, and included in several of them was this very woman! At the time she was fifteen years old, and here I was meeting her in real life at ninety-five. I was in awe.

Her last meeting with her father, she recounted, was when she bumped into him while waiting on line. Her father didn’t recognize her because her head was shaven. After realizing who it was, her father gathered his words. “My dear daughter, listen... Stay strong, stay frum, and take care of yourself.” “That’s the last I ever heard from my father,” she said, “and I’ve tried all my life to do all three.”

Still at the table, I couldn’t help but think to myself, “Hashem, you’re talking to me. If there’s anyone we can learn from, it’s this woman. What am I complaining about? I’m complaining about being flown to England to inspire others? What am I talking about!”

It hit me right then. Most of the things complained about in life are a blessing. Your Friday night table is a blessing, your kid's school is a

blessing, your friends are a blessing, you live here or there is a blessing. You have so many weddings to go to? It's a blessing.

If there's anything that came out of that trip, perhaps it was what I taught others. But something tells me it's the other way around. It's what it taught me.

Rabbi Noach Isaac Oelbaum

Forgive Every Night

Rav Chaim Greengrass z"l studied in the yeshiva Tiferes Yerushalayim for nearly forty years and enjoyed a personal chavrusa (study partnership) with the Mashgiach, Rav Michoel Birnbaum zt"l. Of course, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva, was around in those days. Rav Chaim personally attested to the following incident involving Rav Moshe.

A disagreement arose between two individuals, and it was decided to present the matter to Rav Moshe, who would give the final ruling. After doing so, Rav Moshe received a phone call. "I am Rav so-and-so," said the man calling, "and I want to mention that with regard to the Din Torah which the Rosh Yeshiva ruled on, it's contrary to an explicit Gemara!" Rav Moshe wanted to

ask which Gemara he was referring to, but before he could, the phone went silent.

A few months later, the same Rav who had called approached Rav Moshe seeking a *haskama* (approbation) for a *sefer* he had just written. Rav Moshe went on to give the Rav a glowing *haskama*, well beyond the expectations of someone who had just recently disrespectfully phoned him.

Eventually, it was time for the Rav to go, and Rav Moshe seized the opportunity. "Please tell me," asked Rav Moshe, "what is the explicit Gemara you were referring to?" The Rav looked at Rav Moshe confused. "I have no idea what the Rosh Yeshiva is talking about."

As it soon became clear, an imposter had called Rav Moshe, using the name of this Rav.

But one question still lingered for

Rav Moshe. "Being that all along you thought it was this Rav who made the phone call, how did you go on to give him a *haskama*, let alone such a warm and praiseworthy *haskama*?"

Rav Moshe responded rather simply. "It didn't make a difference. That night, before I said *Krias Shema Al Ha'Mitah* (the *Shema* before retiring to sleep), I forgave him. And therefore, I had no ill feelings against him anyway, so even if it was him, I let it go and I gave him the *haskama*."

Every night, before we nod off to sleep, we have the opportunity to remove from our heart any ill feelings that might remain entrenched within. Sometimes it might be easy, sometimes it might be hard. But it's always worth it.

Rabbi Benzion Klatzko

Like Mother, Like Daughter

More than twenty years ago, I had a student who we sent to Israel. Her father was a Reform rabbi and her prospects for spending time in Israel in a religious environment were not too great. Until my family and I got to know her

more and more and we eventually encouraged and supported her trip and stay in Israel.

She was incredibly moved by the experience and wound up staying in Israel for a longer time, eventually marrying a respected *ben Torah* who was learning in yeshiva.

Decades later, she called me and filled me in on the details of the past years.

Her husband was still learning in *Kollel*, she had a family, and she asked if she could introduce me to them. I was thrilled to comply.

She had ten children, eight of

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them girls. Greeting them at the Kosel, I felt a swell of pleasure and privilege to meet them. In a way, they felt like grandchildren, and I'd known that my own family had molded and shaped their mother and contributed in some way to the life and family she now had.

But then it occurred to me. There were eight kids; two were missing. "Where are your other two children?" I asked. "I only see eight." She looked at me and smiled. "I have a boy who's sixteen years old and in yeshiva. I know you'd like to have seen him, but I didn't want

to disturb his learning, so he stayed back for today." I returned her a smile of my own. "You made the right choice. Torah is the most important thing! And what about the other one?"

"The other is my daughter, Adina. She actually is a counselor in New York." This caught my attention. "That's wonderful. I'm going back to New York next week after my trip is over. I'd like to meet her."

Sure enough, when I returned, I called her up. "Adina, I'd love to invite you to my home for a Shabbos. Come and see what your mother

experienced many years ago." She took up the offer, and was blown away by what her mother experienced and what she was now experiencing herself.

Adina grew close to my family, and she was a beautiful light in the lives of others. And when she got married a few months later, my entire family flew in for the wedding.

She married my son.

I was mekarev her mother, and the daughter married my son. And today they live in Ramat Shlomo.

When we reach out, Hashem facilitates amazing wonders.

Rabbi Ephraim Epstein

A Gift for the King for Morocco

You might be familiar with the Reichman family from Canada. The Reichman's, a very well-to-do family, are great benefactors and philanthropists. And although they come from Hungary, before then, they have their history in Morocco.

It therefore didn't come as too big a surprise when the King of Morocco held an extravagant birthday party and invited people from all over the world to attend, the Reichman's included. But this didn't make it any less easy. Many households struggle with what to get family members for their birthday. And if you can imagine that being a question when thinking about a family member, it's certainly a question when thinking about the King of Morocco.

Uncertain what to get, the Reichman's convened with the in-

tent of reaching a consensus. In tossing around multiple ideas, they knew they wanted to create a Kid-dush Hashem through their actions and likewise gift the King with something which honors him. After many days of discussing it and mulling it over, they decided.

The heralded day arrived and the Reichman's flew to Morocco and attended the birthday. There, individuals began getting up one by one and stating what they had chosen as the gift to honor the King. One announced, "We, the Country of Africa, pledge to his Highness an island off the coast of Africa for his birthday." Another got up and declared, "We, the family from Britain, are giving a fleet of racehorses to his King, his Highness, for his birthday."

And then Mr. Reichman got up, sweating. With a sense of reverence

and humility, he said, "We, the Reichman family from Toronto, Canada, humbly pledge to the King, his Highness, that we will build a beautiful Jewish school—a yeshiva—in the city of Fez in Morocco, with his name on the school."

There was dead silence in the entire room. Mr. Reichman began sweating even more profusely, as the King began getting red. Grabbing the microphone, he screamed, "What, are you crazy? You're going to build a Jewish school in Morocco? You think the future of the Jewish people is in Morocco? Build it in Israel! The future of the Jewish people is only in Israel!"

And if you visit the neighborhood of Talpiyot in Jerusalem today, you will see a Moroccan Jewish school built in honor of the King of Morocco.



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Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 14 Sivan)

עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)	גלי בן טליה (ברמן)	אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור)
עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)	דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)	אביתר בן גליה (דוד)
עידן בן דלית (שתיי)	דורון בת סימונה שרה (שטיינברכר)	אברהם גלעד בן אמונה (מונדר)
עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)	דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבע)	אגם בת מירב (ברגר)
צחי בן דבורה (עידן)	הירש בן רחל גולדברג פולין)	אוהד בן אסתר (בן עמי)
קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)	זיו בן טליה (ברמן)	אוהד בן אסתר (יהלומי)
קרינה בת אירנה (ארייב)	טל בן ניצה (שוהם קורנגולד)	אור בן גאולה (לוי)
רום בן תמר נועה (ברסלבסקי)	יאיר בן רות אדית (הורן)	אורי בן עינב אפרת (דנינו)
רומי בת מירב (גונן)	יגב בן אסתר (בוכשטב)	איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)
שגב בן גלית (כלפון)	יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)	איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)
שגי' בן נעמית (חן דקל)	יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)	אלון בן עידית (אהל)
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)	ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)	אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)
שלמה בן מרסיל (מנצור)	כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)	אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)	כרמל בת כנרת (גת)	אלכסנדר בן אוקסנה (לובנוב)
	לירי בת שרה (אלבג)	אלכסנדר ששה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)
	מקסים בן טלה (הרקין)	אלכסנדר בן נינה (דנציג)
	מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)	אלמוג בן נירה (סרוסי)
	מתן בן ירדנה (צנגאוקר)	אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)
	נמרוד בן יקי (כהן)	אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי)
	נעמה בת איילת (לוי)	ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)
	עדן בת שרית (ירושלמי)	אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
	עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)	אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)
	עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)	בר אברהם בן ג'וליה (קופרשטיין)
	עומר בן שלי (שם טוב)	גד משה בן שרה (מוזס)
	עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה)	גיא בן מירב (גלבע דלאל)

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 14 Sivan)

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