

# The Torah Any Times

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## Rabbi Benzion Klatzko

### A Charming Surprise

Our Sages teach us, “Ein simcha k’hataras ha’sefeikos—There is no joy like the resolution of doubts” (Zevachim 90a). There’s nothing like a question mark that disappears and clears.

One of those great question marks we have as Jews is, “Am I living up to my potential?” Very often, we know that we could be doing better. But when we receive a kiss from Hashem, it’s a way for Him to pull aside the curtain and let us know, “I love you and I’m here with you.” It makes us feel whole, and our joy is boundless.

Some time ago, I headed with my daughter to Arizona for her mid-winter vacation. Once there, I began looking for a store which sold Pandora charms. They’re little bracelets my daughter has, and I wanted to add to her collection. The charms are a bit expensive, but they mean a lot to her, and I wanted to make her vacation memorable and special. So we looked around for a store which sold them, but couldn’t find any, which was a bit frustrating. However, we moved on and carried on touring that day, eventually ending up at the Botanical Gardens.

We began walking among the cacti—big ones, small ones—and it was beautiful. It was a nice, hot Arizona day to top it off. And as we walked around, we ventured into a deep discussion about life’s struggles, growth, and many things

teenage girls often wonder about. It was an opportunity for me, as her father, to have a heart-to-heart with her.

After our conversation, I said, “Let’s take some pictures.” There was a wall in the Botanical Gardens, and the view from that location was strikingly beautiful. I told her to hop on the wall so I could take some pictures. She did, and as I started clicking away, she suddenly said, “Tatty, there’s something here on the wall.”

We both looked atop the wall, and there it was. Just lying there. A Pandora charm. Here we were in the middle of the desert, and neither of us would have ever, even remotely, expected something like this to just appear. “Tatty, did you put that there?” my daughter asked. “No,” I said, chuckling between my words. I had never been to the Botanical Gardens in Arizona before. She picked it up, and not only was it a beautiful charm, but it also had a little metal tag with the words: Psalms 37:24.

We immediately looked up the verse. “Though he may stumble, he will not fall, for G-d upholds him with His hand.” We were both wordless. Finding the exact thing we were looking for, in the middle of the desert, with a tag that had such a meaningful message, felt like a kiss from Hashem. We left the Botanical Gardens feeling uplifted, knowing our connection with Hashem was so pure, so everlasting.

He indeed will see us through

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##### L'refuah Sheleima

Deena bat Shoshana

Chaya Raizel bat Dena

Yerachmiel Eliyahu Ben Esther Riva

Reuven ben Rochel

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## Rabbi Daniel Glatstein

### The Joyful Jackpot

Imagine if you could triple your earnings. You would work the same amount of time, and yet you could make three times the amount of money you're making now.

Let's put some numbers to the calculation.

Suppose you're earning \$1 million a year and putting in 40 hours a week. Now, imagine if I told you there's a way to make \$3 million a year instead.

In the physical world, that might not be so easy. But in the spiritual world, you could literally triple your earnings.

Here's how it goes.

We always talk about performing mitzvos with simcha (joy). In fact, the joy we experience and feel when we perform a mitzvah is itself a mitzvah. The joy we feel, for instance, when we put on tefillin, when we daven, or when we learn, is actually a mitzvah of serving Hashem with joy. The Torah criticizes the Jew for not serv-

ing Hashem with joy, and from there we learn that it's a separate mitzvah to serve Hashem with joy.

Rabbeinu Bachye teaches that the mitzvah of serving Hashem with joy is actually more valuable than the mitzvah itself. So, say one person, Reuven, wears tefillin, and another person, Shimon, wears tefillin and does so with joy. The added joy that Shimon experiences—just the joy alone—is more valuable than the actual mitzvah of putting on tefillin.

But how much more valuable is it? Allow me to share an amazing Rambam.

The Gemara (Berachos 8b) teaches us that if someone eats on the day before Yom Kippur (Erev Yom Kippur), the Torah considers it as if they fasted on both the ninth and the tenth of Tishrei. The Rambam explains that we are charged to be joyous that we are going to fast on Yom Kippur. As such, ideally, we should have a festive meal to demonstrate our joy. Since we obviously can't hold a festive meal on Yom Kippur because it's a day of fast-

ing, we have the festive meal on the ninth of Tishrei (Erev Yom Kippur). Therefore, that festive meal is considered like fasting on both the ninth and the tenth.

In other words, fasting on the tenth is only fasting on the tenth, but eating on the ninth and showing that we are joyous about fasting on the tenth is worth two fasts. So, we learn from here that a mitzvah is, so to speak, worth one point. The added joy that we experience while doing the mitzvah is an additional two points. So, if our mitzvos were worth \$1 million, now they are worth an additional \$2 million. We've literally tripled our earnings to a total of \$3 million. And if we can do this for each mitzvah, we've really hit the jackpot.

And that's why it's so important to always be Jewish and joyful.

## Rabbi Paysach Krohn

### When Flowers Grow

Every one of us is supposed to have three loves: Ahavas Hashem, Ahavas HaTorah, and Ahavas Yisrael. We must love Hashem, love the Torah, and love each other. How do we know about Ahavas Yisrael? The Pasuk tells us, "Ve'ahavta l'reacha ka'mocha—Love your fellow Jew like yourself" (Vayikra 19:18). Rashi cites what R' Akiva says about these words: "Zeh klal gadol ba'Torah—This is

a great rule of the Torah."

I saw a beautiful explanation as to why this is so important.

There are certain mitzvos that perhaps not everyone can do. For example, if you are not a Kohen, you cannot do certain mitzvos. But if you love the Kohen and you encourage him to fulfill his role, then you have a share in that mitzvah. There are many mitzvos for people who live in Israel. We who live out-

side of Israel can't do those mitzvos. But if we love the Jews in Eretz Yisrael and support them, then they can fulfill their roles, and we share in their mitzvos.

Loving every Jew is so important—and they come in all shapes and sorts.

Here's one of them.

In Baltimore today, there is a doctor named Dr. Josh Hurwitz who loves gardening and landscaping. In 2002, Rabbi and Mrs. Chananya Kramer, who had been a part of the kollel at Ner Israel, moved just

six houses away from Dr. Hurwitz. As Shavuot approached, Rabbi Kramer bought his wife a beautiful bouquet of flowers, and she placed them on the table, making the house look lovely.

Right before Yom Tov, however, their two children, Yaakov (seven and a half) and Adina (six), came into the house holding very beautiful flowers. Mrs. Kramer quickly figured out where they got the flowers. Embarrassed, they admitted, "We went to Dr. Hurwitz's garden. He has so many beautiful flowers, and we thought he wouldn't miss these. We wanted to give them to you as a gift."

Mrs. Kramer smiled. "That's very nice of you, but we cannot take flowers from someone's garden, especially Dr. Hurwitz's, without permission. We must go back, apol-

ogize, and return the flowers."

They walked six houses down to Dr. Hurwitz's door and knocked. Yaakov and Adina then began. "We apologize. We took the flowers without permission and wanted to give them to our mother for Shavuot. We're sorry." Dr. Hurwitz, a kind man, smiled and said to Mrs. Kramer, "Children will be children. It's okay. I'll take care of it. I'll put everything back, and everything will be fine."

Two days after Yom Tov, Mrs. Kramer was surprised when Dr. Hurwitz knocked on her front door. He asked to see the children. Mrs. Kramer, worried he might be upset, called Yaakov and Adina.

Dr. Hurwitz proceeded to take them to the backyard, hand them bulbs and seeds, and say, "Yaakov, Adina, here you go... Let's plant these together. I'll show you how Hashem's flowers

grow." He taught them how to water the plants, and in a few weeks, they saw the flowers blossom.

When the flowers finally grew, Dr. Hurwitz returned and showed the children the beauty of the flowers, gently reinforcing the lesson of not taking things without permission and likewise, showing kindness. It was a moment demonstrating how to care for the nature of our world and the beauty of friendship too.

This is what Ahavas Yisrael is all about—responding with understanding and kindness, even when someone makes a mistake. Dr. Hurwitz showed them just that.

And we all can too.

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## Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

### Life-Saving Words

As one soldier was about to enter Gaza, he met a rabbi who had come to give all the soldiers some words of strength and encouragement, alongside a beracha (blessing). But to this one soldier, it was an experience he didn't know how to make sense of. "Listen, Rabbi, I don't really understand what you're doing. I didn't grow up with this. You're giving me a beracha, but what am I supposed to do with this blessing? I don't connect it to anything Jewish. Does your blessing even help me?"

The rabbi listened, taking a moment to collect his thoughts. "I want to tell you a story, if I may."

The soldier nodded.

"There was a Minister of Education in Israel named Zalman Aran. Do you remember him? Back in the 1960s, he was active. Anyway, Aran grew up in Russia. He was a communist, then a socialist, and then a professed atheist, eventually becoming the head of the Ministry of Education in Israel. One day, he was speaking to a group of young officers in the army and told them, 'You see me as an atheist, but I wasn't always this way. When I was much younger, I went to cheder. I went to yeshiva. I knew Tanach by heart, and I thought I knew some Gemara.'

'In 1917, during the massive up-

heaval in Russia, I became a communist and through that, an atheist. I don't believe in anything—not Torah, not mitzvot, not G-d. But you should know, during the war, the war came to our city. We ran away to the nearby forest, and we came under fire. As bullets whistled past me, I grew filled with incredible fear, and began running to find safety. And then, without even thinking, I started screaming. What was I screaming? All of a sudden, I realized I was screaming the words of Tehillim.'

'At that minute, I was so embarrassed. Here I was, an atheist who had abandoned G-d and Torah, and now, under fire, I was screaming the words of Tehillim. No lesson learned, no teshuvah, just embarrassed. I knew Tehillim once, I

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screamed it in fear, and I was embarrassed.'

One of the soldiers in the audience approached Aran and said, 'You know, you're a real rasha, a wicked person.' 'Why am I a wicked person?' Aran asked. The soldier explained. 'I grew up in a country where you ran the education system, and I didn't go to yeshiva. You made sure that in the secular Israeli school I attended, I never learned any Tehillim and I never learned any prayers. And now, I'm a soldier in the army, and when they fire at me and I want to scream for help, I don't know what to yell, and I don't know who to yell to. You're a wicked man, Mr. Aran, because you stole from me what to scream and who to scream to. I should have been given the choice whether or not I wanted to keep that.'

The rabbi turned to the soldier. 'And because of this, I came to give you a beracha. You asked how it helps you? I'm going to teach you what to scream if you need to scream.' Aran then took a piece of paper and wrote in big letters, 'Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad.' He read it to the soldier and told him, 'When you say these words, you cover your eyes and call out to G-d. These are words that Jews have said in the worst times and the best times. They said it in the gas chambers, during the Inqui-

sition, in pogroms, and in times of incredible torture. It should stand by you if you ever need to shout, if you ever need to reach out for help.'

Hearing this, the soldier was moved. He went on to give the rabbi a big hug. Then he made his way into Gaza. As far as the rabbi knew, that was the end of the story.

A while later, the rabbi received a phone call from Soroka Hospital. They told him that a soldier had requested him by name and asked him to come visit. The rabbi couldn't recall who it might be, but he got in his car and drove to Soroka. When he arrived, he saw an Israeli man pacing back and forth. 'Are you the rabbi my son is calling for?' The rabbi nodded, and the man hurried him upstairs to his son's room.

There, the soldier sat, covered in bandages from head to toe. He motioned for the rabbi to come closer. And then, weakly, he said, 'We went into Gaza, and we did great work. We killed terrorists, fought hard, and achieved a lot. One day, we got into an alleyway and were under heavy fire. We saw three terrorists at the other end and managed to kill one, but the other two escaped into a building. My friends and I followed them inside. We were firing at each other at close quarters. Finally, I pulled out a grenade, threw it across the hallway, and told my guys to duck. The grenade exploded, and

the terrorists fell. But then, we didn't realize there was one more hiding. In slow motion, I saw him pull the pin and throw a grenade at us. It was so close, and I knew I had just sentenced my friends and myself to death. I didn't know what to do. The only thing that came to my mind was to scream. As I thought of screaming, I covered my eyes and said, 'Shema Yisrael.'

But as I covered my eyes, my hand jerked up, and the butt of my gun hit the grenade, sending it back across the hallway. It exploded, killing the terrorist. My friends and I were badly injured, but they're going to be okay. I had to call you to tell you that asking what good is your beracha, what good is your Shema Yisrael—it saved my life and the lives of my friends.'

The notion that a person says Shema at the end of his life is well-known. But sometimes, saying Shema marks not the end of a life, but the beginning of an entirely new one. And in a moment, a person can do something, see something, or say something that completely alters the trajectory of their life on this earth.

Sometimes, all it takes is a few words of blessing. Sometimes, all it takes is six words of Shema.

## Rabbi Label Lam

### Worth Repeating

Somebody clever once told me, "Anything worth saying is worth repeating." And then he said it again: "Anything worth saying is worth repeating." Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato writes in his introduction to the Mesillas Yesharim, "Ha'toeles yotzei

min ha'chazara alav v'ha'hasmada." "Ha'toeles yotzei min ha'chazara alav v'ha'hasmada." The only good result comes from constant repetition. The only good result comes from constant repetition.

And perhaps this works because, in the words of the Chovos HaLevavos,

"Ha'machshava nimshachas achar ha'dibbur." "Ha'machshava nimshachas achar ha'dibbur." Thought is shaped by speech. Thought is shaped by speech. And Dovid Hamelech had said, "He'emanti ki adaber." "He'emanti ki adaber." I believed because I spoke. I believed because I spoke.

If you find a good phrase that's worth repeating, it's worth saying over and over, again and again.



# Bring Them Home!

## Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 26 Tammuz)

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

# *Bring Them Home!*

## *Names of Hostages in Gaza*

*(Updated: 26 Tammuz)*

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