

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld

Shabbos Saves

Yossi was a dedicated yeshiva student, studying diligently in a yeshiva in Har Nof, Jerusalem. One day, he came across a set of books on the laws of Shabbos. Deeply inspired, he decided to enhance his observance of Shabbos and elevate its sanctity in his life. Without hesitation, he purchased the set of books, eager to immerse himself in their teachings.

Yossi had cousins scattered throughout Israel, and one of them, whom he visited frequently, did not observe Shabbos. Despite this, Yossi enjoyed spending Shabbos with him, partaking in meals and experiencing the unique atmosphere of the day. He had his own designated room in his cousin's home, where he would stay during his visits.

Every Friday night, they would sing a few Shabbos songs and share a meal together. Afterward, his cousin would retreat to his room to watch television, while Yossi would retire to his own space to study.

One particular Shabbos, not long after Yossi had acquired his new set of books, he decided to put his commitment into practice. After the meal, he took out the first volume, lay down on his bed, and began reading. He read with deep concentration, absorbing the words until his eyes grew heavy with sleep. Marking his place in the middle of a passage, he set the book down and drifted off.

That Saturday night, his phone

rang. It was his mother.

"Yossi, do you know what happened to your cousin?"

"No," he replied, confused by the urgency in her voice.

"His house caught fire," she said. "The entire home was destroyed."

Yossi was shocked. "Is he okay?" he asked, his heart pounding.

"Yes," she reassured him. "No one was home at the time. Everyone is safe. But the house... it's completely gone."

Later, Yossi received a video of the aftermath. His cousin walked through the ruins, stepping over charred debris, the entire home reduced to ashes. The walls had collapsed, the ceilings burned away—everything was lost.

But then came an astonishing revelation.

As his cousin reached what had once been Yossi's guest room—the very space where he had spent so many a Shabbos—he stopped in disbelief. The room was untouched. The fire had raged throughout the house, consuming everything in its path, but it had stopped at the door to Yossi's room. Inside, everything remained intact, as if shielded from destruction. The bed was untouched, the walls unscathed.

Even more remarkably, the bookshelf where Yossi had placed his seforim stood undamaged. The books remained exactly as he had left them, preserved in perfect condition.

Yossi was overwhelmed. He

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thought back to that Friday night, recalling the exact line he had read before drifting off to sleep. As he reopened the book, his eyes fell on the words:

"A home that does not keep Shabbos will be devoured by fire (Shabbos

119b). But one who safeguards Shabbos creates a shield—not only for his home but for himself as well."

At that moment, Yossi witnessed the power of Shabbos with his own eyes. It was more than a day of rest—it was a source of Divine protection. Then

and there, he knew the truth that Shabbos is not merely a ritual; it is a safeguard, a spiritual fortress that protects those who honor it. Observing Shabbos is not only a mitzvah—it is a shield for our homes, our families, and all of Klal Yisrael.

Rabbi YY Jacobson

Tied to Tefillin

On the fateful morning of October 7th, at 6:15 AM, 12-year-old Ariel Zohar set out for his morning run in Kibbutz Nachal Oz, southern Israel. He could never have imagined the horror that would soon unfold. As terrorists infiltrated his home, they brutally murdered his father, Yaniv, his mother, Yasmin, and his two sisters, Techelet and Keshet, before setting the house ablaze. Ariel was the sole survivor of his family.

At the funeral, tears flowed freely as mourners witnessed a young boy standing alone, grieving the unimaginable loss of his entire family. A ZAKA volunteer approached Ariel, asking if there was any item from his home that he wished to retrieve—some final remnant of a life stolen by the flames of cruelty and hatred. His answer took them by surprise: "Yes, I want my tefillin."

Ariel's father had purchased tefillin for him in anticipation of his bar mitzvah, just a few weeks away on Chanukah. More than anything, Ariel longed to hold onto this sacred connection to his family. However, the kibbutz remained under fire—it was too dangerous to return.

The IDF granted rescuers a mere six minutes to enter the charred remains of the home and salvage whatever they could. Rushing inside, they were uncertain whether anything had survived the inferno.

And yet, amid the destruction, they spotted the pristine tefillin—miraculously intact. Alongside them, they recovered a family photo album.

Delivering the tefillin and album to Ariel at his grandfather's home, the scene became even more overwhelming. Ariel's grandfather, a 91-year-old Holocaust survivor, rose to his feet and addressed his grandson:

"When I was 14, the Nazis murdered both of my parents. Yet I remained strong, and now, I have a grandson here with me in our eternal homeland. The Nazis of today—these terrorist murderers—have done the same to you at 12 years old. They took your parents, your family. But I know that you will stand strong. And one day, you will live to see your grandchildren in the Land of Israel too."

Weeks later, on the first day of Chanukah, the festival of light, Ariel celebrated his bar mitzvah. Wrapping himself in the very tefillin his father had lovingly bought for him, the glow on his face could melt the coldest of nights.

Among those who attended the bar mitzvah was Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, former Chief Rabbi of Israel. Born in 1937 in Piotrków, Poland, Rabbi Lau survived the horrors of the Buchenwald concentration camp as one of the youngest children to emerge from the Holocaust. He, too, had lost nearly his entire family. And yet, he had gone on to become a beacon of strength, wisdom, and leadership for

the Jewish people.

Standing before Ariel, Rabbi Lau, now 87, placed a gentle arm around the 13-year-old orphan. He spoke with the weight of history and the depth of personal experience:

"Ariel, at my bar mitzvah in 1950, my father had been murdered. My mother had been murdered. Many of my siblings were murdered. Like you, it was my uncle and aunt who brought me to my bar mitzvah. From there, I went on to study Torah in the yeshiva. And whatever came of me, came of me."

He paused, then looked Ariel in the eyes. "Ariel, I want you to know—whatever you want to achieve, you will achieve. You have the strength within you."

With warmth and conviction, Rabbi Lau offered to be Ariel's older brother, a guiding presence in his life. He did not diminish the depth of Ariel's pain, nor did he pity him. Instead, he embraced him, empowered him, and reminded him of his infinite potential.

As Ariel listened, his face softened with a smile, his eyes reflecting both sorrow and determination. He knew why he had insisted on retrieving his tefillin—because they were more than leather and parchment. They were the secret of Jewish eternity, a living bond to his father, his family, his people.

If you have not yet taken on the mitzvah of tefillin, consider starting. If you already do, inspire another Jew to do the same. Do it for Ariel. Do it for his father. Do it for

his family. Do it for the Jewish people. In a world darkened by hatred, be the light.

To all the orphans, we love you, we believe in you, we grieve with you. And we know how strong, holy,

and beautiful you are. Thank you for being you.

Rabbi Yaakov Mizrahi

The King of Shabbat

I know a young man who, back in Israel at Lev Aharon, experienced a life-changing transformation. It was early in the school year, during one of those special Shabbat weekends at the beginning of Elul. I walked into the dorms and saw a group of boys gathered around, their faces lit up with excitement, cheering and celebrating.

Curious, I approached them. "Hey, boys! Shavua Tov! What's going on? Everything okay?"

One of them turned to me and said, "Rabbi, Charles just kept Shabbat for the first time in his life!"

Charles was an 18-year-old boy who had never observed Shabbat before—not out of defiance, but simply because he had never been exposed to it. And now, for the first time, he had kept an entire Shabbat.

Some might look at Charles and think, Wow, this guy has violated so many Shabbatot. If you do the math—five years, fifty Shabbatot per year—that's 250 serious transgressions. Some might even assume that he had little hope left, that despite being a good person who gives charity and does other mitzvot, he had already sealed his fate.

But Charles didn't see it that way. Not only did he keep that one Shabbat, but he kept the next one, and the one after that. Before long, he became the king of Shabbat in the yeshiva.

Every Friday, he and his friend, David Tawol, would go around the dorms collecting anything that could be a distraction—smartphones, devices, anything the yetzer hara could use to tempt the boys away from keeping Shabbat. They would safe-

guard them until Motzei Shabbat and return them afterward.

Charles and his friend were on fire. They weren't just keeping Shabbat—they were in love with it. They were addicted to it. And when Charles returned for his second year of study, his commitment only deepened.

Today, Charles is married, a dedicated Torah scholar in Jerusalem, with a family of his own. And to anyone who doubts that real teshuva is possible, Charles did teshuva. Big time.

All it took was one small step. He didn't need to plan how he would transform his entire life. He didn't need to worry about where he'd be four or five years down the line. He just had to focus on one Shabbat.

That's the key. We don't need to have it all figured out. We just need to start. Take that first step, make that small move, and let the rest be guided by the One Above.

Rebbetzin Slovie Jungreis-Wolff

Starts With You

The most important person you will ever meet in your life is yourself. You hold within you the power to illuminate the world, to transcend limitations, and to embark on a journey of self-discovery. Lech Lecha—go beyond your borders, venture into the unknown, and uncover the depths of your true potential.

Each day is a new page in the

story you are writing, a gift given to you by the Almighty. Every morning, we declare, Raba Emunatecha—"Great is Your faithfulness." Hashem, You believe in me. You have given me a purpose. I have a mission. I matter. Modeh Ani—I am profoundly grateful for my life.

But who is this Ani, this "I"? What is my unique purpose? What is my mission? What makes me distinct in this vast world? There are billions

of people on this planet, yet not a single one shares your fingerprint. Consider that. Not one among billions. Why did Hashem design the world this way? Because the physical mirrors the spiritual—just as no two individuals share the same fingerprint, no two souls share the same Divine imprint.

Each of us has a singular mission, a distinct energy to contribute to the world. But what holds us back? What prevents us from actualizing our potential? What barriers keep us from becoming the best versions of ourselves?



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We all know the commandment: V'ahavta L'rei'acha Kamocha—"Love your fellow as yourself." Hashem didn't simply command us to love others; He added Kamocha—"as yourself." Why? Because you cannot truly love another if you do not first know how to love yourself. You cannot extend kindness to others if you do not first show kindness to yourself. You cannot forgive others if you do not first learn to forgive yourself.

This is not about self-care in

the form of off days or indulgent breaks. Kamocha is deeper. Loving yourself means allowing yourself to make mistakes, to grow without relentless self-criticism. It means not viewing yourself through a harsh and unforgiving lens. Because when you do, that same negativity will inevitably color the way you see others.

Recognize your strengths so you can recognize the strengths in others. Cherish your soul so you can cherish the souls around you. Ac-

cept imperfection in yourself so that you can embrace the imperfections of others. And when V'ahavta L'rei'acha Kamocha becomes your guiding principle, you unlock the ability to accomplish anything.

The foundation of all relationships begins within. Only when you cultivate a healthy and compassionate relationship with yourself can you truly build meaningful connections with those around you. It all starts here—with you.

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Harvest Your Days

My wife's aunt, Sarah, lived in Ness Ziona, Israel. She passed away a few years ago, well past a hundred years old. Not long before she died, she called my wife one day and said, "Do you know what happened to me? I just got back from the doctor, and he gave me this pill. He told me I have to take one every day—for the rest of my life."

There was once a young rabbi applying for a position in a certain village. As part of his visit, he was given a tour of the town, which included a walk through the cemetery. As he read the inscriptions on the gravestones, he was struck by what he saw. Almost every inhabitant seemed to have died before reaching the age of 30. "This is

terrible," he said. "What tragedy happened here?"

His guide reassured him, "No tragedy. In our village, the tradition is to record only the days and years a person truly lived—time spent immersed in Torah, mitzvot, and good deeds."

A day in the life. A moment of connection with G-d is a lifetime. Every breath we take is a world of opportunity. Every moment.

Time appears to us as an unfeeling, relentless march toward the end. As poet William Carlos Williams once said, "Time is a storm in which we are all lost." The English word moment comes from the Latin momentum, implying ceaseless motion—the unstoppable progression of time.

But in Hebrew, the word for moment, *rega*, comes from *ragu'a*, which

means calm or rest—the rest of your life. Now, that doesn't mean time stops. As Chaucer wrote, "Time and tide wait for no man." But time itself is a series of stops—discrete, individual realities.

You are not simply riding the conveyor belt of time. Instead, imagine time as a sushi conveyor—each moment passing before you, offering you the chance to grasp it, to enter into it, to make it yours.

The Torah describes aging as *Ba Bayamim*—"coming with days." The Zohar explains the verse, "Avraham was old, coming with days," to mean that Avraham brought all of his days with him when he left this world.

Days must be gathered, harvested—each moment's potential realized to its fullest. Every moment contains the rest of your life. Even when you are 97 years young.

Rabbi Label Lam

Leading the Prayers

I didn't catch all of the heartwarming drama in shul on Friday night, but my son filled me in later.

It seems there was a young man with Down syndrome who desperately wanted to lead the congregation in Kabbalas Shabbos. But he wasn't really capable of doing so

on his own.

Instead, they wrapped him in a tallis and had him stand beside the chazzan, who guided him through the prayers, singing alongside him the entire time. And when the service ended, everyone gathered around to congratulate him, to thank him, to make him feel like he had done

something extraordinary. And he did. He felt amazing.

Later, my son turned to me and said, "Abba, that's exactly how it is with us."

"Hashem does everything. And yet, even our small participation is enough to create the appearance that we accomplished something ourselves."

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza and Partial List of Injured Soldiers

(Updated: 1 Shevat)

שמות חיילים פצועים לרפואה שלמה

אביתר מנחם חיים בן זהבה
אברהם מרדכי בן יעל
אהרן בן שרה הנדל
אופק בו אלינור
אורי אברהם בן הדסה
אייל אליעזר בן חנה
איתן אשר בן דבורה
אלון בן מרים
אלחנן יאיר בן דבורה
אליה בן רות
אלישע יהודה בן רות
אלעד בן שרית
אמיר בן אלה
בנימין בן ריינה
בנימין יצחק בן שרה
בר חיים בן נורית
גלעד איתי בן אפרת
דוד בן זיוה
חיים מרדכי בן שרה איטה
טל גרשון בן שרה
יאיר יונה בן דרורה צפורה מלכה
יהודה אהרון בן מרים אסתר
יהונתן יאשיהו בן כרמית
יהונתן יוסף בן שירה
יואל בן אילה
יוחאי יהודה בן סיגל חוה
ירין אליהו בן סיגל
ישראל בן ענבל אסתר
כפיר חיים בן מירה מרים
מיכאל בן פריידל
מישל בת אנג'ליקה
מנחם דוד חי בן מרים
משה אהרן בן לאה בילא
משה צבי בן עירית
מתן בן דבורה
נועם אברהם בן עטרה שלומית
ניר בן אורנה
עדי מנחם בן מורן מירה
עודד אפרים בן ויויאן
עוז חי בן סמדר
עידו בן ענבל
עידן בן טובה
עמיחי בן סיגלית רחל
עמית יהונתן בן מאיה
רואי בן עופרה
רון בן אבישג
רון בן שרון
רועי חיים בן מירב
תום שאול בן דניאל
תומר בן צפורה

אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור)
אביתר בן גליה (דוד)
אוהד בן אסתר (בן עמי)
אוהד בן קרן (יהלומי)
אור בן גאולה (לוי)
איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)
איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)
אלון בן עידית (אהל)
אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)
אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)
אלכסנדר ששה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)
אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)
אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)
בר אברהם בן גיוליה (קופרשטיין)
גיא בן מירב (גלבוע דלאל)
גלי בן טליה (ברמן)
דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
זיו בן טליה (ברמן)
טל בן ניצה (שוהם קורנגולד)
יאיר בן רות אידית (הורן)
יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)
יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)
יצחק בן דבורה (עידן)
ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)
כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)
מקסים בן טלה (הרקין)
מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)
מתן בן ירדנה עינב (צנגאוקר)
נמרוד בן ויקי (כהן)
עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)
עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)
עומר בן שלי (שם טוב)
עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)
עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)
עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)
קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)
רום בן תמר נועה (ברסלבסקי)
שגב בן גלית (כלפון)
שגיא בן נעמית (חן דקל)
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)
שלמה בן מרסל (מנצור)
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza and Partial List of Injured Soldiers

(Updated: 1 Shevat)

INJURED SOLDIERS

Evyatar Menachem Chaim ben Zehava
Avraham Mordechai ben Yael
Aharon ben Sarah Hendel
Ofek ben Elinor
Ori Avraham ben Hadassah
Eyal Eliezer ben Chana
Eitan Asher ben Devora
Alon ben Miriam
Elchanan Yair ben Devorah
Eliya ben Ravit
Elisha Yehudah ben Rut
Elad ben Sarit
Amir ben Ella
Binyamin ben Reina
Binyamin Yitzchak ben Sarah
Bar Chaim ben Nurit
Gilad Itai ben Efrat
David ben Ziva
Chaim Mordechai ben Sarah Itta
Tal Gershon ben Sarah
Yair Yonah ben Drora Tzipporah Malka
Yehuda Aharon ben Miriam Esther
Yehonatan Yoshiyahu ben Carmit
Yehonatan Yosef ben Shira
Yoel ben Ayala
Yochai Yehudah ben Sigal Chava
Yarin Eliyahu ben Sigal
Yisrael ben Inbal Esther
Kfir Chaim ben Mira Miriam
Michael ben Freidel
Michelle bat Angelika
Menachem David Chai ben Miriam
Moshe Aharon ben Leah Beila
Moshe Tzi ben Irit
Matan ben Devorah
Nir ben Orna
Noam Avraham ben Atara Shlomit
Adi Menachem ben Moran Mira
Oded Efraim ben Vivian
Oz Chai ben Smadar
Ido ben Inbal
Idan ben Tova
Amichai ben Sigalit Rachel
Amit Yehonatan ben Maya
Roi ben Ofra
Ron ben Avishag
Ron ben Sharon
Roi Chaim ben Meirav
Tom Shaul ben Danielle
Tomer ben Tzipporah

Avinatan ben Ditzza Tirtza (Ohr)
Evyatar ben Galya (David)
Ohad ben Esther (Ben-Ami)
Ohad ben Keren (Yahalomi)
Ohr ben Geula (Levi)
Eitan ben Ruth Idit (Horen)
Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor)
Alon ben Idit (Ohel)
Eliya ben Sigalit (Cohen)
Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi)
Alexander Sasha ben Yelena Leah
(Tropanov)
Elkana ben Ruchama (Buchbut)
Ariel ben Sylvia Monica (Konyo)
Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas)
Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein)
Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa Dalal)
Gali ben Talya (Berman)
David ben Sylvia Monica (Konyo)
Ziv ben Talya (Berman)
Tal ben Nitza (Shoham-Corngold)
Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen)
Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ochana)
Yitzchak ben Aneta Chana (Elgarat)
Yarden ben Penina (Bibas)
Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas)
Maxim ben Talleh (Herkin)
Matan ben Anat (Angrest)
Matan ben Yardena Einav (Tzangauker)
Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen)
Oded ben Bilhah (Lifschitz)
Omer ben Niva (Venkrat)
Omer ben Shelley (Shemtov)
Ofer ben Cochava (Kalderon)
Idan ben Yael (Alexander)
Omri ben Esther Veronica (Miran)
Yitzchak ben Devorah (Idan)
Keith Shmuel ben Gladis Chava (Segal)
Rom ben Tamar Noa (Braslevsky)
Segev ben Galit (Chalfon)
Sagi ben Naamit (Chen-Dekel)
Shiri bat Margit (Bibas)
Shlomo ben Marcelle (Mansour)
Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)