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Restored Story
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There are no flies and no heat.

Rabbi Tzvi Felman zt"l recounted that one summer day when he was studying at the Ponevezh Yeshiva, there was a particularly hot day, and it was difficult to sit down to study. There was a slight feeling of lethargy from the heavy heat; there were no air conditioners, there were hardly any fans, and as a result it was very hot. In the afternoon, when the heat increased, the Rabbi said to his chavruta: "Let's go down to the Chazon and see what he is doing today; if he sits and studies as he always does, it is a sign that the heat is not a reason to stop studying, and we must continue to learn."

In fact, the two young men went down to the Chazon Ish's house to see and learn from him a great deal. They entered the room of the Gaon Yisrael in awe. And they saw the Chazon Ish sitting at the table with the Gemara and the books, completely immersed in the toil of the Torah as he usually did every day. In the Chazon Ish's room, it was as hot as in all other places. There were also many flies and other flying birds in the room, since Bnei Brak was built near the orchards. And from there they came flying into the houses. All of this did not affect the Torah labor of the Chazon Ish, and they did not see any difference between this day and the other days. The sight of the Chazon on such a day, and in such a situation, provided them with an immediate answer to the question for which they came: There is no difference between this day and the other days, and the mitzva of the Torah is performed on the same level as on other days. However, the great wonder is how one can learn without being disturbed by the great heat and the many flies that came as a result of the heat, the young man decided that he must ask this question to the Chazon Tzvi himself. He approached the Chazon Ish. In order to wait for a moment, he lifted his eyes from the Gemara and noticed him,

but for a moment he delayed. But the young man did not give up, and decided to wait until he received the answer to his question.

After about half an hour, the Chazon Ish noticed him and asked him what he wanted. The young man began to ask, "How can you learn when the whole room is full of so many flies?" The Chazon Ish answered by arranging his glasses to see and look for the flies that fill the room, and as he did so, he answered, "I don't see anything." If the Chazon Ish does not see the flies, and therefore they do not bother him, then what can be asked? So, the young man turns to the second and main question, after all, the heat is felt even without seeing it, and he says to the Chazon Zohar that it is very hot today, "How can you study with such heat?" The Chazon Zohar is very surprised and says, "Is it hot today? And it seemed that the Chazon wondered what that young man wanted; he sat and studied and did not feel either the flies or the heat. The Chazon Zohar, who saw the young man amazed at this answer, continued, "You should know, the flies and the heat are only until you enter the sugya, but from the moment you enter the sugya, there are no flies and no heat, you don't feel anything!"

The Donkey Who Spoke (On the Jewish Front – Balak)

How many jars did I ask you to buy?" my mother asked Meir.

"Two," replied Meir, who was holding one jar.

"And where is the other one?" my mother asked.

"It's broken," the boy shrugged.

"How did it break?!" my mother wondered.

...That's it," Meir demonstrated, smashing the jar in his hand to the floor"

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After the donkey swerves off the road, presses Balaam's leg against the wall and lies under it – each time Bilam grabs her with a stick – God opens the donkey's mouth.

Surprisingly, she speaks like a donkey: "What have I done to you because I have been struck by three legs"...

Wouldn't it have been appropriate that until a miracle happened and she was given the ability to speak from Heaven, that she should behave politely and apologize

for having changed her course? To explain that something prevented her from continuing?!

Bilam, also a great sage, responds to her on an incredibly grave level: "Because ...you have abused me." Or in the language of children: you began

"האמתון שוב שואלת: "ההספן הספנת לעשות לך כה

Balaam answers simply: "No."

Hunger bothered him and tormented his intestines. With no other choice, the starving bear decided to go into captivity at the zoo, where at least he would be provided with food every day.

"We don't need a bear," the kindergarten director replied, "but I'm currently missing a monkey of a certain species in one of the cages. Are you interested?"

"Monkey?" the bear shuddered, "Not for me. I have no idea what a monkey does."

"We will teach you everything," the principal promised. "You'll be a perfect monkey."

After days of practice and making a costume suitable for the bear's size, the bear entered the cage and began performing the stunts in front of the zoo visitors. But the diet for which he voluntarily went into captivity was nothing. A bear like him needs a lot of food. Bananas and peanuts, with all due respect, are not really enough.

One day, when it was dark at the zoo, the bear decided to go to the bear cage. Curious to see what their living looks like. To his surprise, he discovered huge amounts of food in the back of the cage. "Say," he turns to Dov, who is in the cage, "why don't you eat?"

"I'll tell you the truth," the bear replies, "I'm not a bear at all. I'm a monkey. I was hungry in the forest so I voluntarily went to the zoo to get food. The manager told me that the role of the monkey is already occupied, but if I want, I am welcome to be a bear. But my body is small, and I don't have room for all this food."

"What a strange world," the bear was astonished. "I'm a bear in a monkey cage, and you're a monkey in a bear cage. Tomorrow morning, we will go to the manager and ask him to switch between us. This is necessary."

The next morning, when the two of them were standing in the manager's office and raising the idea of a change, the manager interrupted the proposal sharply: "There's nothing to talk about! Everyone stays in their own cage."

"Mr. Principal," the bear apologized, "excuse me, but you talk like a donkey"...

"That's right," the director agreed, "when I was hungry in the forest I went to the zoo and asked to go into the donkeys' cage. The secretary said the cage was full. But if I want to, the manager's position is vacant."

Rabbi Azaria Figo, in his book *Bina Le'atayim*, explains by virtue of the perplexity with which we opened the strange conversation between Bilam and the donkey: The donkey actually acted wisely, when instead of apologizing, she tried to gently remark to Bilam, "What have I done to you that you have struck me?"

Why are you beating – the donkey inquired – because I'm not okay? After all, until today, everything has been excellent.

For the first time, I behave strangely, "it's three legs" in a row, and you, a donkey like you, instead of realizing that something happened, hit...

??? Why doesn't it occur to you that there is a special reason here

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"Not suitable for you." "Anyway, but you?!"

We have probably heard or heard these words more than once.

Perhaps the miracle that the donkey opened its mouth was not for Balaam, but for generations: if someone is usually okay and behaves properly and suddenly we see a drastic change, if we check 'how did a jar fall for him?' he will simply answer 'like that.'

Instead of hitting him with a stick, instead of explaining to him how inappropriate it is, it may be worth finding out if he is getting the food he needs.

Maybe one donkey decided to feed him monkey food, and he's actually a bear...

We are not in the same boat. (Sarah Pachter)

Throughout this pandemic, I keep hearing the phrase "we're all in the same boat." Well, that's not true. Some people are sick or their lives are in danger. Others have lost family members. Some people face unbearable isolation and

loneliness, while others have large families and extensive responsibilities. We may all be going through the same storm, but our boats are quite different.

Everyone has a different experience of the pandemic, and the way we internalize this reality will affect how we deal with the storm and the extent to which we can come out of it happy.

Sean Aiker, a well-known researcher and professor at Harvard, tells his audience the following story:

Imagine for a moment that you enter the bank. There are 50 other people in the bank besides you. Suddenly, a robber comes in and shoots once. You get a bullet in the right arm.

Now, if you were to honestly describe this event to your colleagues and co-workers the next day, would you describe it as a happy or unfortunate event?

Almost always, the audience responds in a 30/70 distribution. Most people say that this is an objectively unfortunate event. "I was just busy with my business, I was running errands, and suddenly I get a bullet in my hand!" or "Seriously?! Am I *the only* person who was shot?!"

Somehow, 30% of the audience comes to the conclusion that this is actually a lucky event. They see a different perspective: "I could have taken a bullet in the head or in the heart. I could have died." Others claim, "Fifty people in the room and no one died! It's very lucky."

Where does this ability to see the full half of the glass come from? How can we consistently create a positive outlook on life?

We tell ourselves stories regularly. When we are in a certain situation, we unconsciously tell ourselves some opposing stories, comparing what could have happened to what actually happened.

Those people whose counter-story was *that I was the only person shot* would reasonably conclude that a shot in the arm is an unfortunate event.

However, those who use the same comparative thinking style according to which *I could have died, but survived*, will regard the shot in the arm as something positive.

The comparisons we make between life situations are what determine how satisfied we are with life. Our ability to create an alternative explanation is key

to whether we respond emotionally paralyzed or flexibly and adaptively. By cultivating a positive explanation mindset, you can become part of the 30% of people who see the glass halfway full.

The best part about the counterstory is that it's completely hypothetical. And that means we have the ability to create stories like this and use them to help us feel happier.

The Mishna teaches us, "Who is rich? He who rejoices in his lot" (Tractate Avot 4:1). How do we reach this state of positivity? The secret lies in the story, in the new way of thinking that a person can create for himself.

No matter how terrible our situation is, creating contrasting, colorful, and vivid stories will help us sweeten our lives.

What do you say to yourself during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Do you say:

- I can't do it anymore.
- These masks are suffocating me!
- Maybe it's better to leave the children at home so they don't get infected?
- The children don't stop fighting!
- So sad that it is still impossible to host...
- I hate teaching distance learning!

or

- I'm lucky to be alive.
- All my family members are healthy.
- Thank God I'm not stuck in the hospital.
- I'm so happy that I have a family and children that I can hug, even if they don't hug friends and family yet.
- I am thankful that I have access to protective measures.

When we have good counter-stories, we can handle any storm. These stories are the eternal secret to cultivating a good eye and a positive attitude. One day, a few years from now, we may have a bad week or a bad month, but hopefully the memory of COVID-19 will serve as a counter-story to fill that difficult moment with joy.

Fire 2 (Peninei Torah and Chassidism, Issue 41)

The Brisker Rav of the Gaon Rabbi Wo'al'ela z"l, used to tell us that his elders, the Gaon Rabbi Yasha Ber Brisker, would shut himself up in his room every night for a whole hour and did not reveal to anyone what he was doing in his room during that time, until his associates decided to trace his actions there alone, until he came up with a chance to discover that every night Rabbi Yasha Ber took boiling wax and put it around his hands. To check himself whether the fire of Hell would control him, and since his hands were not burned, he knew that the fire of Hell would not control him.

Rabbi Shalom Shvadrin, who heard this story from the mouth of Rabbi Wo'al'el Brisker, went and told it to the Gaon Rabbi Isser Zalman of Altzer zt"l, who was a student of Rabbi Chayei Brisker zt"l. Rabbi Isser Zalman told him that he did not believe this story, because it was a level of Tannaim and Amoraim, and not of the tzaddikim of our time.

Rabbi Shalom was not lazy, and he returned to Rabbi Wo'al'ela and told him that Rabbi Isser Zalman says that he does not believe his story. Rabbi Wo'ela was not impressed and said to Rabbi Shalom, "Rabbi Isser Zalman is right that he does not believe this, for the level of such a high level that a woman will be found in a child, there is no need to believe except what is found in the Gemara and midrashim, but I, who heard the story from the mouth of my father zt"l, clearly know that the story is true.

It is interesting to me that once the Rav of the Beit Yisrael of Gur called to his room Rabbi Chaim Slavitschik, the son of Rabbi Welwel, who was not so mentally healthy, and said to him, "You should know that your father will never be allowed to come out of Hell (because of your actions)." The son of the Brisker Rav answered him, "It is true that he will never come out of there, for the Beit Yisrael did not enter there, and the Beit Yisrael enjoyed this answer and said to him, Indeed, that was my intention, and you caught my meaning.

A woman who inseminates and gives birth to a male. (Good Words – Parashat Tazria)

Rabbi Nachum Cohen related that he testified that he heard from Rabbi Shimon Eliyahu Schlesinger zt"l, who one day accompanied the tzaddik Rabbi Shlomke of Zvihil. Suddenly, a Jew came up to him and told him, in great tears, that he had been childless for a long time. "My wife got to the point where she instructed me to ask for a blessing from the Rebbe, and said that I had no reason to come home without a promise from the Rebbe that we would have children. I ask that the Rebbe have mercy on me, and promise me a viable seed," the Jew cried. The Rebbe thought to himself for a few minutes, and then said, "Look, you're asking me to promise you. I'm ready, but only on condition that you promise me a few things, too." Of course, the Jew gave his consent to the deal, and even before he heard what the Rebbe's demands were, he said "yes." Then the Rebbe said to him: "I heard about you that you are the head of the mikveh, and most of the Jews there are gathered around you. I want to ask you that when you go to the mikveh, don't talk." And secondly, I heard that your talk does not end with the mikveh, but even when you come to pray in the synagogue, you are not one of those who maintain complete silence... And it is considered one of the main speakers. If you promise me that you will stop speaking in the mikveh and in the synagogue, I promise you a male son. Of course, the Jew took it upon himself to do so, and those who met him in the aforementioned places did not know what had happened to him... They had become accustomed to seeing him talking and talking, and suddenly he was silent like a fish. But we've already said, what don't you do to have viable sperm?... And so, even though he was looked upon as if he had gone insane, he continued to remain silent.

And it came to pass during the year that the Rebbe's promise was fulfilled and a male son was born to him. The Rebbe of Zvihel was honored with the sandakot and then the happy father asked the Rebbe, "What measure for measure" is there in silence and the birth of a male son? The Rebbe answered with new words: It is brought in the name of Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz that the Holy One, blessed be He assigns to each person the measure of pleasure that he will enjoy here in this world. While you are speaking in the mikveh and in the synagogue, the secular words, You are fulfilling the benefit allowance that God has allocated to you, and you no longer have the right to enjoy the pleasure of having a child. When you stopped talking, and then you did not enjoy it anymore, you could have been provided with the pleasure of giving birth.

“אש התורה”

Rabbi Noach's son, Rabbi Hillel Weinberg, shlita, describes how it all started with three young men in a small room in Kiryat Sanz. No one imagined that these first steps would culminate in the form of Aish HaTorah and its offshoots. No one imagined, except Rabbi Noah Weinberg himself. Those close to him testify that he genuinely believed that he would bring the Messiah by his own power – through his efforts. His impressive achievements were small in his eyes because he knew and was convinced that Hashem wanted more. Rabbi Hillel, He said at his funeral that if Rabbi Weinberg were to stand in front of us right now, he would say that we can reach more than he did. We can reach the level of Moshe Rabbeinu! The words of Chazal on this subject were not for him just another vague statement that had nothing to do with life, these words were for him a truth that we must take very seriously.

An amazing story I heard about Rabbi Weinberg shows how high his level of faith was, and how much it influenced his practical life. His daughter told us during the shiva that once a chess champion came to the Aish HaTorah yeshiva, studied there for a few days, and decided to leave. Rabbi Noach invited him to play chess with him, but stipulated that if that champion wins, he can leave the yeshiva. But if Rabbi Noach wins, he must stay. Rabbi Noach won. When asked where he dared to offer such a deal, he replied that he knew that Hashem wanted that young man to remain in the yeshiva, so he wholeheartedly believed that he would give him the ability to win.

It is most appropriate to end with one of the stories that Rav Noach often told. Many years ago, Rav Shach zt”l visited the Aish HaTorah Yeshiva on the occasion of a brit mila. He was amazed to see such a large number of repentant people – people who came from a completely Western life and entered a life of Torah. The young Shach stood up and said something that he had never said before: he quoted the verse from Hoshea: “Return Israel to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled in your transgressions” (Hosea 14:2), and he asked, “From the verse it sounds like the fact that we have sinned and failed in so many sins is actually the reason why we must return to the Lord our God.” How is that possible? Why? In order to answer his question, he explained that as much as evil is capable of spoiling, good can repair at least to the same extent, if not more. According to this, if a person is able to distance himself so far from the Holy One, then there is no doubt that he is also capable of returning to Him, and even reaching a higher

level! To the extent that a person's evil inclination is strong and powerful, the greater is the good inclination. Similarly, Rabbi Shach continued, if history has proven that one human being can destroy the lives of six million people, then a human being can also save the lives of six million people! Rabbi Shach was awakened to this idea because of the deep impression left on him by the sight of Rabbi Weinberg's amazing achievements.

Rav Hillel, the son of Rav Noach, went on to say that the man who caused such terrible destruction – Hitler – was not particularly talented or intelligent, and yet he was capable of causing such great damage to humanity. Therefore, each of us, no matter how stupid and incompetent he may be, has the potential and ability to do even better than Hitler's evils and crimes. How can we reach such a level? We must learn from Rav Noach, To develop our faith and trust in Hashem, we will have the strength to believe that we can achieve unbelievable successes and achievements if Hashem really wants to.

Such a level of faith and trust in God, such as that reached by Rav Noach, seems very high and difficult to achieve. However, his greatness in this and all other areas did not come as a result of his natural talents – but rather as a result of years of hard work in which he worked and invested in his relationship with God. We will strengthen ourselves and our connection with God by studying and studying the six permanent mitzvot – the first of which is faith. This is the key to reaching the level of confidence that the Jews reached at the parting of the Red Sea, and which was represented all the days of his life by Rabbi Noah Weinberg zt"l. May God grant us all the privilege of learning from Rabbi Noach, continuing in his path and efforts and fulfilling his dream – that every Jew will return to his Father in heaven.

The Illusion of Happiness (Kol Barama, Issue 304)

Yochai A. was born in a small Jerusalem neighborhood to wonderful parents; his parents pinned their hopes on him that he would grow up in Torah. He was sent to the best Torah school and then to a small yeshiva with a good name, and from there to a large yeshiva that did not suit his spiritual qualities. At a certain point, he "cooled down" in his faith and rarely prayed and concentrated on the issues that were studied in the yeshiva: "I can't sit and study; what will I make a living from when I get married?" "Oh my God," his friend Avraham rebuked him, "you are only 17 years old, you have all your life to work, where are you running?" And so Yochai found himself working in a bakery, saying: "I live my life to work

for a living, with ten fingers, with sweat and toil; if I am not for me, who is for me, and I promise that after my daily toil I will also learn Torah. Because 'the Torah is better with the way of the land.'

The friends protested, the parents cried, the rabbis were frightened, but Yochai was ready. Yochai got married, had six children, and the pressure of making a living remained the same. What didn't he work in? A baker and then a waiter, a bus driver, a construction worker, an office cleaner and then... He did not see a blessing in his labor, the unsettling pressure that remained the same during the yeshiva days. He toils and toils, worships his hands, and they barely produce him a bit of bread and water. One morning, while he was standing as an assistant in a fish shop, his longtime friend, Avraham, came into the shop to buy fish. "Avraham?" asked Yochai. "Yochai?" answered Rabbi Avraham, who was the rabbi of an important yeshiva. Thirty years had passed, unbelievably. After a short hug, Yochai asked the store owner, Shlomo, for permission to talk a little with his friend. They sat at the back of the store. "Avraham, I remember very well how much you tried to coax me to refrain from going out to work... You were so right; just explain to me, why do I not have a blessing in my labor? Why am I constantly pressed and worried?" Rabbi Avraham looked at his friend from Naar with piercing eyes and said: "Yochai, my good friend, listen to the story that the intellect is on its side,

There was a wise and wealthy king who established a spacious and magical garden in his palace that the eye was not satisfied with the beauty and splendor and the harmonious combination of springs and streams, trees and wonderful flowers. One day, the king, in his kindness of heart, with his wealth and happiness, announced that he wanted to give a treasure of gold and diamonds to a citizen who would succeed in extracting the treasure from the depths of one of the springs in the courtyard of his palace. The king informed his citizens that it was allowed to dive only once and try to extract the treasure. The depth of the spring pool did not exceed 3.5 meters, so that a strong and healthy person could easily reach the box and become very rich. And they jumped into the water one after the other, one after the other. The treasure was right at hand, close and visible and even unbelievable... As they sank into the depths and felt it, they could only find stones and water plants; the crate simply disappeared from their sight. Who hasn't tried to pluck the illusion of happiness? Everyone, important people and commoners, old and black, was convinced that he and only he would be able to extract the legendary wealth from the depths and live the rest of his life without worries. The king sat disappointed that none of his subjects were getting the happiness they

coveted. "Oh, Rabbi Avraham, I am convinced that I would have accomplished this task; they just didn't plough well into the depths of the spring. The water creates a slightly misleading reflection; I wonder how it ended," Yochai was excited. It was only after almost all the citizens of the kingdom had given up that a simple Jew came to the place and asked the king: "Your Majesty, will you allow you to win your treasure chest, even without getting wet?" "Of course," replied the Jew. The wise Jew stood on the edge of the spring pool, raised his head upwards, jumped swiftly, climbed from branch to branch, and lowered the treasure chest from the tree's top. You see, Yochai, the crate was actually placed on a branch at the top. All that had to be done was to hold your head up, look up, up, up; there is the treasure.

My friend's question, and I answer you : the rich livelihood and happiness are not to be found in the labor of the hands, in the sweat, in the pursuit of the treasure in the depths, no and no. The livelihood is from heaven! ,If you looked upwards to the Father in Heaven, prayed to Him, asked Him, you would be privileged to receive your livelihood with dignity without worrying about tomorrow; you would become rich and happy in part, depending on where you look, Rabbi Yochai, to .the depths or to the heavens, that's all the difference