זכרו תורת משה

בס"ד

לעילוי נשמת ר' משה בן החבר צבי זצ"ל ור' משה יצחק בן אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל

פרשת עקב ה'תשפ"ו

HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Vol. #266

The Detour That Saved His Life

Rabbi Avraham Krupnik, a prominent *posek* and publisher of *From the Desk of Rabbi Avraham Krupnik*, shared a remarkable story about a relative of his. As a young Jewish man living in the Soviet Union, Elya was drafted into the Soviet Army and served during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979–1989).

Shortly before he was scheduled to be sent into combat, he developed a severe infection and was admitted to a military hospital.

With so many medical personnel having been deployed to the front lines, the hospital was desperately understaffed. After doctors determined that Elya required emergency surgery, they had no choice but to operate under extremely difficult conditions. With little staff available to assist, they performed the procedure without anesthesia while Elya remained fully conscious.

The ordeal was excruciating.

After the surgery, the doctors delivered more difficult news. Under normal circumstances, he would have remained hospitalized to recover. But with a constant stream of wounded soldiers arriving from the battlefield, every bed was desperately needed. They had no choice but to discharge him.

When Elya realized how overwhelmed the hospital staff had become, he made an unexpected decision. Though still recovering himself, he volunteered to help in the nursing department. For the next several weeks, instead of serving on the battlefield, he spent his days caring for wounded soldiers.

Only years later did he recognize the profound blessing hidden within those painful events.

During the Soviet-Afghan War, nearly 620,000 Soviet soldiers served in Afghanistan. Almost 14,500 were killed, while more than 53,000 were wounded, many suffering life-altering injuries. Elya's infection, the agonizing surgery, and his unexpected role as a volunteer nurse kept him away from the front lines. What had seemed like a terrible setback ultimately became the very means through which Hashem spared his life.

Elya went on to build a beautiful family, and this remarkable story was later shared by his relative.

How often do we view life's greatest disappointments as tragedies, never realizing that they may be Hashem's greatest acts of protection? What appears dark, painful, and bewildering today may, in hindsight, prove to have been the very path that led to the greatest *yeshua* — saving not only a person but generations yet to come.

Evacuated Happily

Mrs. Gruenwood shared the following experience: A few years ago, shortly after getting married, she and her husband moved to Yerushalayim. They found what seemed like the perfect apartment: two

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bedrooms, a spacious living area, an excellent location, and best of all, very reasonable rent. They assumed they would be able to remain there for several years.

When it came time to renew the lease, however, the rental market had changed dramatically. Although they expected their landlord to raise the rent, they assumed he would ask for only a reasonable increase.

Instead, he demanded more than 4,000 additional shekels per month, and gave them two weeks to decide.

The pressure was overwhelming. Affordable apartments in Yerushalayim were already difficult to find, and locating one within such a short time seemed nearly impossible.

The two weeks passed without success. Their landlord informed them that he had already begun looking for new tenants and that they should no longer expect to remain.

Eventually, they found another apartment. It was smaller, more expensive, and lacked many of the conveniences of their previous home. At the time, it felt like a clear downgrade. To make matters even more painful, they later discovered that the new tenants weren't even paying the amount the landlord had demanded from them.

Mrs. Gruenwood struggled with the disappointment for a long time. She felt hurt having been forced to leave and frustrated having to pay more for what seemed like much less.

She worked hard to accept the situation with *emunah*. She thanked Hashem for giving them a home in Yerushalayim, the holiest city in the world, and reminded herself that they still had much to be grateful for. Yet despite her efforts, she found it difficult to understand why things had unfolded this way.

Then came the war.

Over the past two years, Eretz Yisrael has endured wave after wave of attacks. At first, sirens in Yerushalayim were only occasional. More recently, particularly during the war with Iran, they became increasingly frequent. For twelve consecutive days, residents were forced to run to shelter at least once each day, often in the middle of the night.

Only then did Mrs. Gruenwood begin to see the advantage of her new apartment.

Their previous building had neither a *maamad* nor a communal shelter. Whenever the sirens sounded, families had to hastily wake their sleeping children, get everyone dressed, and rush down flights of stairs to the building's stairwell in search of safety.

Their new apartment, however, had one feature they had barely noticed when they moved in: a *maamad*.

Instead of scrambling out of the apartment in the middle of the night with frightened children, they simply walked a few steps into the next room.

With that single difference, everything changed.

What had once seemed like an unfair eviction suddenly looked very different. Years before the first sirens ever sounded, Hashem had already prepared a safer home for her family. The apartment she had viewed as a disappointment had quietly become one of the greatest gifts they could have received.

Today, Mrs. Gruenwood says she gladly pays the higher rent every month.

Each payment reminds her that Hashem saw a war she could not see, sirens she could not imagine, and frightened children she had not yet needed to comfort. Long before she understood why, He had already arranged exactly what her family would one day need.

At the time, it felt like she had lost the apartment she wanted. Looking back, she realizes she had been given the apartment she would one day need.

Edited by: Binyamin Lieb

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