

The Elevator Pitch

Rav Daniel Yaakov Travis, *rosh kollel* of *Kollel Toras Chaim* in Yerushalayim and author of *Living On* and numerous other *seforim*, frequently travels from Eretz Yisrael to America to raise funds for his *kollel*. During these trips, he visits supporters at their workplaces, delivers short *shiurim*, and offers his *seforim* for sale. It is demanding work, but essential to keeping the *kollel* running.

One year, just three days before Pesach, Rav Travis found himself in New York City, making his way down a long staircase with his arms full of *seforim* he hoped to sell. Exhausted from his travels, he reached the final flight and felt he simply had no strength left to continue. He stepped into the elevator for the remaining floor.

Inside stood Shmuel,* who had once attended Rav Travis's *shiur*. The moment he saw him, Shmuel began shouting. "What *chutzpah*! You stop the entire elevator and waste everyone's time, three days before Pesach, just to save yourself one flight of stairs? How selfish!"

Rav Travis remained silent. Though deeply humiliated, he did not utter a word in response.

After leaving the elevator, he called his *rebbe*, **Rav Tzvi Kushlevsky**, *rosh yeshivah* of Heichal HaTorah, and related what had happened.

"*Bizyonos* are great!" the *rosh yeshivah* told him warmly. "*Bizyonos* are precious."

Rav Travis took those words to heart and continued with his day, determined to put the painful incident behind him.

That afternoon, he had arranged a ride to the Five Towns with Asher,* a supporter who worked in Manhattan. Shortly after the elevator incident, however, Asher called with a change of plans. "I'm running late, so I won't be able to pick you up. If you still want the ride, you'll have to be at my office at five o'clock sharp."

Already exhausted, Rav Travis walked twenty city blocks to Asher's office and waited patiently until his ride arrived. But no sooner had they set off than Asher announced another unexpected change.

"I'm so sorry," he said, "but I need to stop in Queens for two and a half hours before we continue to the Five Towns."

Rav Travis was stunned. His entire evening of fundraising

was now in jeopardy, and with Pesach just days away, every hour was precious. Yet rather than give in to frustration, he reminded himself of his *rebbe*'s words: "*Bizyonos* are great! *Bizyonos* are so precious."

By the time he finally reached the Five Towns, he was thoroughly worn out. Nevertheless, he began making his rounds, hoping to accomplish whatever he could in the little time remaining.

At the very first house, the homeowner greeted him enthusiastically. "You came at the perfect time!" he exclaimed. "I just promised that the next person who knocked on my door would receive ten percent of this month's paycheck. And here you are!"

Rav Travis marveled at the timing. Had he arrived earlier, before the man had made his promise, who knew what he might have received?

At the next house, he was met with an equally warm welcome. "I'm so glad you came!" the homeowner exclaimed. "Tell me, how can I help your *kollel*?"

"Would you consider giving five hundred dollars a month for the coming year?" Rav Travis asked.

"Absolutely. It's a deal!"

Rav Travis could hardly believe it. In just a few minutes, he had secured more than ten thousand dollars for his *kollel*. Suddenly, the day's frustrations took on an entirely different meaning. The humiliation in the elevator, the twenty-block walk, and the lengthy detour through Queens had all led him to those doorsteps at precisely the right moments.

He now appreciated, more than ever, the preciousness of the *bizyonos* he had endured. What had seemed like a series of setbacks had become part of an extraordinary *yeshuah*.

Fundraisers often speak of the "elevator pitch," the few well-chosen words one must be prepared to deliver during a brief elevator ride. Yet Rav Travis had delivered perhaps the most effective elevator pitch of his entire trip without saying a single word.

He had swallowed an insult in silence, and that silence had been heard in Shamayim more clearly than any appeal he could have made. The doors that opened for him in the Five Towns that night had first opened in an elevator, just one floor above the ground.

Heard on the Hashem Loves You hotline: 1-267-833-0596.



זכרו תורת משה

Cutting the Line

At the banquet marking the close of the summer, **Rabbi Engel**, head counselor of Camp Chevra in Lakewood, shared the following remarkable story.

During the winter of 2020–2021, Malka,* the granddaughter of a prominent rosh yeshivah, was attending seminary in Eretz Yisrael. COVID-19 restrictions, including mask mandates, were still in effect. Her parents were coming from America to visit her, but shortly before their arrival, Malka began feeling unwell. Running a high fever, she went to a Kupat Cholim clinic to be examined.

The waiting room was crowded, and the line moved slowly. With her fever rising, the mandatory mask made the wait even more uncomfortable. Finally, unable to bear it any longer, she asked the woman behind her to hold her place while she stepped outside for a few minutes of fresh air.

Five minutes later, Malka returned to her spot, only to be met with angry protests from several people waiting in line.

“What *chutzpah!*” they shouted. “How dare you cut the line?”

Malka was deeply humiliated. She had done nothing wrong and could easily have explained that someone had been holding her place. Yet rather than defend herself, she chose to remain silent, swallowing the embarrassment without uttering a word.

After her examination, as Malka was leaving the clinic, a woman in her mid-forties approached her. Her name was Mrs. Carlsberg.*

“I saw what happened,” she began. “You were embarrassed unjustly, yet you didn’t answer back. I know how precious such silence is in Shamayim, and that Hashem listens especially closely to the *tefillas* of someone who remains silent in the face of humiliation. May I ask you for a very personal favor?”

Malka listened attentively as Mrs. Carlsberg continued.

“My daughter is facing two terrible *tzaros* at once. She is expecting a baby, but the doctors have told her that the child is not expected to survive. At the same time, her young baby is about to undergo treatment for a life-threatening illness. We desperately need *yeshuos!*”

Her voice filled with emotion, she pleaded, “Tonight,

when you daven *Maariv*, would you please daven for my daughter and her children?”

“Of course,” Malka replied, deeply moved by the woman’s anguish.

Several days later, Malka was at the hotel where her parents were staying, helping them pack for their return trip to America, when her phone rang.

On the line was the doctor treating Mrs. Carlsberg’s grandchild. He explained that he had been preparing to begin the baby’s treatment, with only one final routine test remaining. But when the results came back, the medical team was astonished. The disease had disappeared.

Not a single lesion remained.

“The baby’s mother gave me your number and asked me to share the news,” the doctor explained. “She wanted you to hear it directly from me!”

Malka was overwhelmed. The child who had been facing a life-threatening illness no longer needed the treatment that had been planned.

Later, Malka accompanied her parents to the airport and bid them farewell. By the time they landed in America, another extraordinary development had taken place.

Their phone rang, and an excited Malka was on the line.

“After you left, I received another call!” she told them. “This time, it was Mrs. Carlsberg’s daughter herself. She told me, ‘I just gave birth to a healthy baby girl! I’m calling you even before I call my own parents because I wanted you to be the first to hear the news. Thank you for your *tefillas!*’”

Two desperate situations, two extraordinary *yeshuos*. And all of it had begun with a young woman who had been wrongly accused of cutting the line.

In that crowded clinic, Malka could easily have defended herself. She had every right to explain that she had not cut the line at all. Yet she chose silence over self-defense, accepting the humiliation without responding.

And while Malka had never cut the line in the clinic, her tefillos had been granted a very different place in Shamayim.

For the tefillah of one who is humiliated and remains silent does not wait its turn.

It goes straight to the front of the line.

