



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT BEHAR — BECHUKOTAI

Of Oranges and Honda Odysseys

In Miami Beach, Florida, R' Yochanan Zweig runs a large yeshiva. As part of its operation, the yeshiva maintains a kollel store, where rebbeim and kollel members can pick up free fruits and vegetables for their families every Wednesday.

One Wednesday morning, a rebbi stopped by the store and selected a few peppers and a crate of oranges. As he was leaving, he ran into one of his students, who eagerly offered to help carry the groceries to his car. The rebbi thanked him and mentioned that his car was a blue Honda Odyssey parked in the lot. The student carried the produce out, found an open van, and placed the peppers and oranges on the middle back seat.

That evening, when the rebbi returned to his car, he noticed that the produce was missing. With a sigh, he realized what must have happened; the student had mistakenly placed the groceries into the wrong vehicle. Almost immediately, however, another concern crossed his mind. In Florida heat, forgotten fruits and vegetables quickly spoil. Whoever owned that van would have no idea what was sitting inside, and the rebbi felt genuinely bad imagining the odor that would soon develop.

The next morning, he returned to the parking lot, scanning the vehicles for any sign of misplaced produce. He then ran into Menachem, the serviceman who delivers groceries to the yeshiva, and casually asked, "Did you happen to see a crate of oranges anywhere?"

At that moment, Menachem turned pale. After collecting himself, he looked at the rebbi and said, "Rebbi, you saved my life." The rebbi stared at him in disbelief. "What are you talking about?"

Menachem explained. "Yesterday afternoon, I was driving home on Collins Avenue. You know I'm diabetic. Suddenly, I began experiencing a severe hypoglycemic attack. Normally I carry glucose tablets, but for some reason, I couldn't find them.

My blood sugar was dropping fast — I started sweating, my vision blurred, my hands shook so badly that I couldn't even grab my phone to call for help. I managed to pull over and hoped someone would notice me."

He paused, then continued. "I slumped back in my seat, barely conscious, and instinctively reached out with my hand. I touched something round. I grabbed it — it was an orange. I took a bite immediately, thanking Hashem with every ounce of strength I had left. I had no idea where the orange came from, but it revived me. My blood sugar began to stabilize, my vision returned, and I was able to make it home safely." [1]

An ordinary person might dismiss this as coincidence, a simple mix-up, a student confusing one minivan for another. But that is not how we view the world. Hashem orchestrates every detail. Someone needed to live, and Heaven arranged that a student make a "mistake."

The Torah repeatedly emphasizes that life is not random, nor are we left to chance. In Behar, the mitzvah of Shemittah teaches a person to step back from the illusion of control and recognize that G-d alone sustains the world. And in Bechukotai, the Torah describes blessings and events not as coincidences of nature, but as direct responses from Heaven. What appears to us as a simple "mistake" — a crate of oranges placed into the wrong van — may in reality be part of a precise Divine orchestration. The challenge is learning to live with that awareness: to see Hashem not only in open miracles, but in the seemingly ordinary details of everyday life.

Hashem is constantly sending us messages. The only question is: are we paying attention?

[1] Story heard from R' Ari Neuwirth

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida	Rachamim Ben Shifra	Yitzhak Ben Naama	Noah
Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa	Mazal Bat Liza	Frida Bat Yaffa	Dovber
Nachman Ben Devora Necha	Miriam Bat Bakol	Yisrael Ben Yocheved	
Chana Bat Nina Nekadam	Esther Bat Frida	Tinok Ben Sara	

"The essence of Sefirat HaOmer: If you lay down one brick a day, every day, you can build something transcendent over 49 days. Now, if that's in just 49 days, imagine the type of skyscraper you can build over a lifetime. Don't let a single day go by without getting a little closer to your goals." (R' Shmuel Reichman)