

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi Mike Bengio Flight 603

October 2, 1996, 12:42 a.m., Aeroperú Flight 603.

Departure: Miami International Airport, Miami, Florida.

Destination: Arturo Merino Benítez International Airport, Santiago, Chile.

Taking off from Miami, the Boeing 757 had touched down at its last stopover: Lima International airport in Peru. It's final leg and final destination in Chile would be next.

The night was a thick black, but pilots are trained to fly under such conditions. Abrupt weather changes, unexpected turbulence and water landings are all par for the course. October 2nd was no different a night. Except for one thing.

Once airborne, Aeroperú Flight 603 discovered irregularities in its flight instruments. Altitude and airspeed, rudder ratio, mach speed trim, overspeed and underspeed were all misreading. Knowing what this meant, the pilots immediately contacted the air traffic controller, concerned yet confident that they'd be able to guide them to an immediate emergency landing. If the instruments weren't working on the plane, the controller would have to play that role tonight.

But there was one problem. Major problem.

The altitude information displayed on the controller's screen was being sent from the aircraft's Mode C Transponder. And the transponder itself was receiving

the same mistaken altitude information, just like the aircraft's altimeter was.

Both the pilot and the controller were getting the wrong reading.

The controller immediately dispatched a Boeing 707 to take off and help guide the 757 to safety. The pilot had already begun his descent, believing that their altitude was 9,700 feet. The truth was otherwise. The plane was much lower.

Blinded by the black darkness of the night, before the captain and controller knew it, the 757 had dropped altitude without any corresponding change being indicated on the altimeter. And then it happened, all so fast.

The 757's left wingtip clipped the ocean water, searing off a chunk of the left wing. The pilot gave a push to climb some altitude, to which he was successful. For all but 22 seconds. The left wing had already sustained damage, and as if time was spiraling forward faster than it could handle, the aircraft slammed into the water, inverting.

All 70 passengers and crew members perished.

13 hours earlier...

The skies had opened, buckets of rain pelting the ground with a deafening night. But it was time to go, and when it's time to go, it's time to go. Our long-awaited Miami vacation had come to an end, and we needed to return home to Chile.

My mother, along with me and my siblings, carefully maneuvered

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down the stairs, mindful of the hurling rain. To this day, I remember it. All at once, my mother slipped, the wet stairs paving her way down to the ground in tumbling motion. Stair after stair she slid, until she came to a halting stop at the bottom. I stood frozen in fear, my mother laying there unmoving.

Immediately, the hotel manager and attendants came rushing to her aid, helping her to her feet and rushing her to the local hospital. As a young boy, I was unsure what to make of everything. On the one hand, I was forced to remain back at the hotel and wait around until my mother was ready for us. On the other hand, with no bedtime and no parental authority telling me and my siblings what to do, things didn't

seem too bad.

But then, I learned the truth. The doctors remained uncertain if and when my mother would be able to walk again. That news was haunting. Until, thank G-d, the tables turned. Hashem healed her and the prognosis that she'd be unable to walk was crossed off. In fact, she'd regained her mobility and ability to walk. But there was something else we all quickly realized.

We'd missed our flight. We never boarded Aeroperú Flight 603.

Hashem places us wherever we need to be and when we need to be there. In davening, we describe Hashem as, "Elokei Ha'Rishonim V'ha'acharonim—The G-d of the beginning and the end." Hashem is in control of the beginning of the story and the

end of the story. Sometimes, the beginning is inexplicable and we have no idea why something must have occurred as it did. But don't worry. Truly, don't worry. There's a very good reason your life turned out just the way it did. Sometimes, you will be privy to the Elokei Ha'acharonim and discover the end of the story and understand why things unfolded as they did. But whether you do or you don't, take solace at the beginning of the story that there's a purpose and reason to be revealed at its end.

May G-d rest the lives of those who perished on that flight, enabling their legacy to be remembered.

And as it was for me and my family, we know why we missed our flight.

And thank G-d we did.

Rabbi Shlomo Landau

An Hour for a Life

One of today's international Jewish speakers was once invited to a weekend Shabbaton. He was to be one of the keynote speakers, and such was not his first time. Still, he had a question for the organizers.

"Would it be alright if my daughter joins me?" The speaker had often been away from his family for Shabbos, and after doing it for a while, realized that it wasn't the most ideal arrangement. So he came up with an idea. As speaking opportunities would avail themselves, he'd attempt to gain permission to have one of his children come along. That way, he'd be able to share some good bonding time with his children and allow them to enjoy a Shabbos getaway too.

"Sure, no problem," said the organizer. So, there, it was settled.

The Friday night meal was magnificent, graced by a wonderful

ambiance peppered with inspiring talks and uplifting melodies. But it didn't end after that. There was a scheduled oneg. More singing, followed by additional divrei Torah would be shared to cap off an already splendid evening.

By 11:30, however, the speaker's daughter was exhausted. The day had wiped her out, and she could barely keep her eyes open. Turning to her father, she let him know that she intended on heading upstairs and turning in for the night. Her father nodded in understanding.

By 1:00, the oneg had wound down, and the speaker made his way to his room. And then he realized. He'd given his only key to his daughter, and he had no way now of opening the door. Giving way to a gentle knock, he came up empty. Not a sound came from behind the closed door. Thinking that his daughter, a teenager, was sound

asleep, he wondered if she'd ever hear him. He decided he'd give it one more go. He did. No response.

Disgruntled, yet understanding and not wanting to wake his daughter, he made his way downstairs to the front desk in the hopes that he'd be able to obtain a spare key. But for some reason, no one seemed to be around. Strange, but considering the booking of the Shabbaton, perhaps the regular staff was off duty. So he resorted to the only option he saw available: pull up a chair. He did exactly that and began reciting Tehilim, hoping to use his time wisely until sleep overtook him.

But within a few minutes, he was surprised to learn that he had company. Making their way to the speaker was an elderly rav and rebbetzin. "Rabbi," piped up the elderly rav, "what are you doing here?" The speaker lifted up his head. "To be honest, I'm locked out of my room

and I have no other place to go.” The husband and wife listened with surprise, and then both motioned that they’d be right back.

Sure enough, within a few minutes, they returned back, freshened up. “If you can’t sleep,” said the rav, “I can’t sleep either.” The rav’s wife took a look at her husband. “I’m here too. If neither of you can sleep, neither can I.”

The three of them proceeded to make way toward the lobby and settle themselves in. A pleasant and meaningful conversation ensued, the speaker, rav and rebbetzin touching upon an array of important life and community topics.

By the time they began winding down an hour later, it was 2:30 a.m. And finally then, the janitor walked by. “Is there anything I can help you with?” he asked. The hour was late, but not too late to catch a few hours of much needed rest. “I was locked out of my room...” trailed off the speaker. The janitor was more than glad to help. And with that, the speaker and rav and rebbetzin bid goodnight to each other, and retired for the night.

The next morning, the speaker was slated to give another talk. In it, he depicted what had happened the night before, crediting the rav and rebbetzin with the quality of

being nosei b’ol im chaveiro. Here he was, the speaker, unable to lay down to rest, and when the rav and rebbetzin discovered this, they knew what they needed to do. It wasn’t a question that they’d join in by sharing and shouldering some of the speaker’s discomfort by remaining wide-eyed too at such a late hour.

The speaker finished his speech, after which the crowd dispersed, and what had been an enriching encounter and experience between the speaker and rav and rebbetzin seemed to have ended.

But when Motzei Shabbos hit, and the rav turned on his phone, it buzzed with news. Good news. Baruch Hashem, their son and daughter-in-law just had a baby. Mazel Tov.

The backstory, though, soon came to light...

It was Friday night when the daughter-in-law began feeling it was time. Yes, it was time to head to the hospital. Being helped by her husband, they arrived expecting the delivery to take some time, but go well. They were in for a surprise.

“Your wife needs immediate surgery,” stated the doctor as a matter of fact to the husband. “And I’m not sure what the outcome will be. We’ll be doing everything we can, but I just don’t know right now what the

future for your baby looks like. I’m sorry.” Thrown into a whirlwind of a crisis, the husband had no idea if the proposed surgery was a good idea, albeit recommended. All he could turn to was his Tehillim.

At 1:30, the doctors exited the operating room, where they had sat to discuss what to do. “After multiple considerations and continuous monitoring of your wife, it seems that the crisis your wife was in has thankfully passed. Keep up your prayers, sir. They’re doing some good work up there.”

An hour later—at 2:30 a.m.—a beautiful, healthy baby was born.

Now, flashback to where the rav and rebbetzin, the in-laws, were at 1:30 a.m.—

At the hotel, deciding to push away the tiredness from their eyes and care enough to sit with another Jew who didn’t have a place to sleep.

And at 2:30 a.m.—

As the three of them stood up and wished each other good night, a new baby entered the world.

That’s nosei b’ol im chaveiro in action. And sometimes, its effect speaks so loudly that the heavens shake and rain down blessing, averting a crisis.

And all at the same time.

Rabbi Yoel Gold

Do You Remember?

While back, I received a call from Eliav Friedman, the brother of Rav Gav Friedman. He proceeded to share with me the following.

It was the first day at Camp

Machanayim, a summer camp in Israel. The staff had gathered around, whereupon Eliav got up on a chair and told them: “I want to encourage all of you to look out for any boy who feels lonely, sidelined or

rejected. Go over to him and buy him a bag of chips or a Snapple from the canteen, strike up some conversation, shoot some hoops or play some catch.

And you know why? Because



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when I was a little boy, I went to a camp called Camp Morris. I was very lonely and felt isolated, and I remember one division head counselor, Ezzy Fireworker, and he took care of me. I want you to know that Ezzy changed my summer and changed my life. Therefore, look out for those boys on the side and reach out to them."

The head of Camp Machanayim, Rabbi Dovid Goldstein, was listening in on this. Thinking it through to himself, Rabbi Goldstein began to wonder if Ezzy Fireworker knew the impact he left on Eliav, so much so that Eliav was now encouraging others to do what was done to him! Rabbi Goldstein decided he'd look into it.

Soon enough, Rabbi Goldstein and Ezzy were on a call together. "Ezzy, you don't know who I am... My name is Rabbi Goldstein. I have a camp in Israel called Camp Machanayim..." With that, Rabbi Goldstein proceeded to share with Ezzy what Eliav had told the staff members the other day, underscoring the impact Ezzy had left on Eliav. "Do you remember this boy?"

asked Rabbi Goldstein of Ezzy.

"To be honest," replied Ezzy, "I don't remember him, because I did it to every kid who I saw was lonely." "Really?" shot back Rabbi Goldstein, surprised. "Yeah, really... And I'll tell you why. When I was a kid at Camp Agudah, I found myself crying one Friday afternoon after hearing that my grandmother had been rushed to the hospital, and there was one counselor who came over to me and asked if something was wrong. I nodded, upon which he invited me into his bungalow and offered me something to eat. I'll never forget it... he changed my summer."

At the sound of this, Rabbi Goldstein thought aloud, his mind racing. "That's amazing! I wonder if that counselor knows the ripple effect that caused you to impact Eliav, who is now impacting the whole staff at Camp Machanayim!" Ezzy could only smile. But Rabbi Goldstein still had one question. "Could you please tell me the name of the counselor who was there for you when you were a camper? I want to give him a call."

"Well," said Ezzy, with a trace of reservation, "I don't know if you know him. His name is Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky." "You mean the Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky, Rosh Yeshiva of the Philadelphia yeshiva?" Rav Goldstein couldn't believe it to be true. But it seemed it was. "Yes, the Rav Shmuel," Ezzy confirmed.

After hearing this story from Eliav and verifying it with Ezzy, I knew it to be true. Still, I never had the opportunity to confirm it with Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlita until a while later. I had a chance to introduce Rav Shmuel shlita at a Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation Convention in Connecticut. In front of 1,500 people, I wondered out loud, "Rosh Yeshiva, do you remember Ezzy Fireworker?"

Rav Shmuel nodded.

You never know how one act of kindness, whether at school or at camp, can change the year, summer or even life of someone else. And that someone else will go on to change the life of another someone else.

For generations to come...

Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

Judge the Entire Person

How can you judge someone favorably?

Look at the entirety of the person. You don't know what they're going through. And if so, the better question is how could you possibly think about judging him?

Imagine someone comes late for davening. Do you know what happened before he came late to davening? Maybe he has some medication he needs to take, so he needs to carve out extra time

to recite some morning blessings at home before leaving. Maybe he got a flat tire or maybe he's not feeling well. There could be dozens of reasons why a person comes late.

When you singularly focus on the person walking in late, and right away, your mind concludes, "He's lazy..." you're overlooking the person in their totality. You judged the sole incident, but you did not account for the whole picture.

The Sfas Emes interprets the Mishnah, "Havei dan es kol ha'ad-

am l'kaf zechus" to mean, "Judge the entire person favorably." You must look at the entire person, not only a part of them. Once you take into consideration the entire panorama, you'll have more insight. So before you even think about judging somebody, step back and ask yourself: "Do I know everything I need to know about the person?"

And to that, the answer is most likely no.

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 14 Sivan)

עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)	גלי בן טליה (ברמן)	אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור)
עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)	דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)	אביתר בן גליה (דוד)
עידן בן דלית (שתיי)	דורון בת סימונה שרה (שטיינברכר)	אברהם גלעד בן אמונה (מונדר)
עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)	דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבע)	אגם בת מירב (ברגר)
צחי בן דבורה (עידן)	הירש בן רחל גולדברג פולין)	אוהד בן אסתר (בן עמי)
קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)	זיו בן טליה (ברמן)	אוהד בן אסתר (יהלומי)
קרינה בת אירנה (ארייב)	טל בן ניצה (שוהם) קורנגולד)	אור בן גאולה (לוי)
רום בן תמר נועה (ברסלבסקי)	יאיר בן רות אדית (הורן)	אורי בן עינב אפרת (דנינו)
רומי בת מירב (גונן)	יגב בן אסתר (בוכשטב)	איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)
שגב בן גלית (כלפון)	יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)	איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)
שגי' בן נעמית (חן דקל)	יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)	אלון בן עידית (אהל)
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)	ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)	אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)
שלמה בן מרסיל (מנצור)	כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)	אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)	כרמל בת כנרת (גת)	אלכסנדר בן אוקסנה (לובנוב)
	לירי בת שרה (אלבג)	אלכסנדר ששה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)
	מקסים בן טלה (הרקין)	אלכסנדר בן נינה (דנציג)
	מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)	אלמוג בן נירה (סרוסי)
	מתן בן ירדנה (צנגאוקר)	אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)
	נמרוד בן יקי (כהן)	אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי)
	נעמה בת איילת (לוי)	ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)
	עדן בת שרית (ירושלמי)	אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
	עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)	אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)
	עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)	בר אברהם בן ג'וליה (קופרשטיין)
	עומר בן שלי (שם טוב)	גד משה בן שרה (מוזס)
	עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה)	גיא בן מירב (גלבע דלאל)

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 14 Sivan)

Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)	Matan ben Yardena (Tzangauker) Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen) Naama bat Ayelet (Levi) Eden bat Shirit (Yerushalmi) Oded ben Bilhah (Lifschitz) Omer ben Niva (Venkrat) Omer ben Shelly (Shemtov) Omer Maxim ben Orna Esther (Neutra) Ofer ben Cochava (Kalderon) Idan ben Yael (Alexander) Idan ben Dalit (Shtivi) Omri ben Esther Veronica (Miran) Tzachi ben Devorah (Idan) Kieth Shmuel ben Gladis Chava (Segal) Karina bat Irena (Ariav) Rom ben Tamar Noa (Brasalevsky) Romi bat Meirav (Gonen) Segev ben Galit (Chalfon) Sagi ben Naamit (Chen- Dekel) Shiri bat Margit (Bibas) Shlomo ben Marcelle (Mansour)	Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas) Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein) Gad Moshe ben Sarah (Mozes) Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa Dalal) Gali ben Talya (Berman) David ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo) Doron bat Simona Sarah (Steinbrecher) Daniella bat Orli (Gilboa) Hirsch ben Perel Chana (Goldberg-Polin) Ziv ben Talya (Berman) Tal ben Nitza (Shoham- Corngold) Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen) Yagev ben Esther (Buchashtev) Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ochana) Yitzchak ben Aneta Chana (Elgarat) Yarden ben Penina (Bibas) Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas) Carmel bat Kineret (Gat) Liri bat Shira (Elbag) Maxim ben Talleh (Herkin) Matan ben Anat (Angrest)	Avinatan ben Ditza Tirtza (Ohr) Evyatar ben Galya (David) Avraham Gilad ben Emunah (Mondar) Agam bat Meirav (Berger) Ohad ben Esther (Ben- Ami) Ohad ben Esther (Yahalomi) Ohr ben Geula (Levi) Ori ben Einav Efrat (Danino) Eitan ben Ruth Idit (Horen) Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor) Alon ben Idit (Ohel) Eliya ben Sigalit (Cohen) Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi) Alexander ben Oksana (Lubanov) Alexander Sasha ben Yelena Leah (Tropanov) Alexander ben Nina (Dantzig) Almog ben Nira (Sarusi) Elkana ben Ruchama (Buchbut) Emily Tehilla bat Amanda Francis (Damari) Arbel bat Yael (Yehud) Ariel ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)
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