

BS'D

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A Son for a Son

[*Editor's note:* This story is based on #596 in this series from 12 years ago, but the writing has been extensively revised and, more importantly, much detail has been added (see Source note at end) – names instead of pseudonyms, etc.]

In the early 2000's, **Gadi Rimon**, an Israeli Defense Force soldier stationed outside of Ramallah, was shot by an Arab terrorist. It happened very early in the morning, and no one else was awake to hear it. Gadi passed out and was bleeding steadily, his life heading toward a silent end.

However, another soldier, **Shlomo Bergman**, who was stationed nearby, heard the shot and went to investigate. He found a fellow Israeli soldier bleeding to death. He tried the best he could to stop the bleeding and called for help. While waiting, he kept applying pressure to the wound--literally holding Gadi's life in his hands.

Gadi was taken to the nearest Israeli hospital where he underwent emergency surgery. Gadi's parents were notified and they rushed to the hospital. Imagine the fear of the parents who were only told, "Your son has been injured and is in the hospital undergoing surgery."

When they arrived the doctor, Rafi Beket, told them that Gadi was shot and had needed many units of blood, but will recover and be alright. However, had it not been for the immediate actions of the other soldier, their son would have bled to death.

It was a miracle that the other soldier heard what no one else heard, and managed to locate Gadi as quickly as he did. The parents wanted to thank that soldier, but he had just left the hospital after hearing that the soldier he helped would survive.

While recuperating at home, Gadi and his parents called the army to find out the name of the other soldier so they could thank him personally. Unfortunately, that soldier's name was not recorded and although they tried other paths of enquiry, they were unable to track down who that other soldier was.

Gadi's mother, **Tamar Rimon**, knew that the important thing of course is that Gadi is well, yet she could not help feeling that as long as she couldn't meet and thank the soldier who bravely saved her son's life--the entire frightening episode would not be fully over. Not being able to express gratitude to the soldier continued to give her an empty feeling.

But then she had an idea.

The couple owned a grocery store in Ashdod, so they decided to put up a sign in the store, describing what happened, figuring that Israel is a small country and eventually they might find out who the mystery soldier was.

Nearly a year passed with no response. Finally, one morning about a year later, a woman customer from out of town noticed, upon exiting, the sign hanging by the door of the

store. **Anat Bergman** recalled how happy her son Shlomo was when he came home one Friday night and told them how he heard a shot and was able to save another soldier's life. She went back and told her son's story to Tamar Rimon, who was behind the counter that morning. The two stories matched and the two women fell into each other's arms.

After a few emotional minutes, they decided to try to reach their sons on cell phones and see if they could meet at the store. Fortunately it turned out that both the young men and even the fathers were able to all meet there that afternoon.

The families gathered for an emotional 'rendezvous'. The soldiers recounted army experiences and finally after all this time Tamar Rimon could stand up and thank Shlomo Bergman for saving her son Gadi's life. Or, as she put it, "You saved my world". She looked forward to feeling "completion" after all this time by thanking the soldier. Little did she know that the story was hardly complete.

After the tearful thank you, Anat privately asked Tamar to speak with her outside. The two women went out alone, whereupon Shlomo's mother startled Gadi's mother by asking her, "Look at me -- don't you remember me?"

"No, I'm sorry. Did we meet before? When? Where?"

"Yes, we did," Anat replied. "You see there is a particular reason I came into your store today. I used to live here, and this time although I was just passing by, I wanted to give you my business, even though I was only buying a few things. I just can't believe you are the mother of the boy whose life my son saved."

"What are you talking about?" Gadi's mother exclaimed.

The other woman answered, "Twenty-two years ago I used to live around here and came all the time to buy milk and bread. One day you noticed that I looked really down and you were very nice and asked me why I seemed so down and I confided in you. I said that I was going through a very difficult time, and on top of that I was pregnant and planning on having an abortion.

"As soon as I said "abortion" you called your husband over and the two of you seemed to forget about your own store and business. You just sat down and patiently listened to me. I still remember clearly what you said.

"You told me that it is true that I was going through a hard time but sometimes the good things in life come through difficulty, and the best things come through the biggest difficulties. You spoke of the joy of being a mother and that the most beautiful word to hear in the Hebrew language is "Ima" (Mommy) when spoken by one's child. You both spoke and spoke until I was convinced that I really should have this baby. So you see, G-d paid you back!"

Tamar's eyes opened wide. Anat continued.

"I had a boy twenty-one years ago that you saved by telling me to think twice before doing the abortion." With happy tears she declared, "My beloved Shlomo wouldn't have been alive if not for you. And lo, he was the one who grew up to save your precious Gadi's life!"

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*Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from [friendsofefrat.org](http://friendsofefrat.org),\** the website of a wonderful organization, **EFRA**T, that dedicatedly (and non-violently!) works to prevent abortions by Jewish mothers in Israel, through counseling and financial incentives. Updated this week with the actual names and a few more facts from a clip sent to me of a television news report at the time of the episode, \* This site is no longer functional. The new, much more professional, site, has 16 very short but worthy stories, but no longer includes the above long one.

*Connection* -- Weekly reading, which includes a detailed section on the relative evaluations of Jewish lives (young vs. old, etc) when a pledge is made to the Holy Temple do donate someone's economic worth.

#### APPENDIX

#### **"Heavenly supervision strikes again!"**

I just received this striking example with the same theme as the above story.

