

The Story of Exodus of the Berkowitz's from San Jose to the Promised Land in the North

(In honor of Mindy and Allan Berkowitz)

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Disclaimer: There is no intended correlation between this story and any other story, real or imaginary that you may have heard. In particular, this does not refer to a *well-known book of short stories* that many of us customarily read each week, year in and year out.

I'm going to tell ten stories. Each presents a problem and then provides a solution.

But first, *the backstory*:

For years, the Berkowitz's had been enslaved in San Jose, but life was getting increasingly difficult and less and less satisfying because *they were slaves making bricks* who also *enjoyed doing good deeds*. Mindy and Allan wanted relief from the chains of slavery in San Jose but also wanted to continue doing good deeds. They decided they should free themselves from slavery and flee to the promised land in the north where they could live in harmony with members of their family.

The Ten Stories Leading up to the Exodus:

1. Mindy and Allan worried they would be forced to choose between friends and family. But they asked themselves, and God, why should they have to choose? Couldn't they do both? They asked God for help.
 - God answered their question. God sent a prophet named AI Gore to come up with a new kind of superhighway that would help alleviate this problem. AI Gore, along with a number of other prophets, invented a superhighway that we now call "The Internet".
 - Years later, after the Internet was invented, others invented a new kind of vehicle, that only ran on the Internet. It was very fast and extremely useful. This vehicle was called "Zoom". Using Zoom and the Internet, Mindy and Allan wouldn't have to choose between friends and family.
2. Over the years Mindy and Allan worked hard making bricks just like everyone else, enabling them to do good deeds. But it was getting more and more difficult. What were they to do? How could they continue doing good deeds if they stopped making bricks? They prayed for guidance.
 - God allowed Mindy and Allan to enter a new stage of life called "retirement". I must confess, I do not understand the essential nature of this stage of life, and I *know* I'm not alone. In fact, there's an important woman *named Mrs. Stein*. I think her first name is *Diane*. She's a very *fine Stein*. It's clear she doesn't understand this retirement concept either.
 - Well, at least one of the Berkowitz's, Mindy, courageous as always, easily entered into this new stage, and she was able to adjust her activities, leaving more time for family, friends, and good deeds.

- *Allan, on the other hand, was stuck with his profession for life. Retirement would be much more difficult for him. You see, Allan was a member of a special group called the “Rabbits”. I will talk more about Rabbits later.*
 - *Eventually, with God’s help, they would both find ways to *migrate to the promised land* and to *continue doing good deeds*.*
3. Mindy had a very strange dream one night. She dreamed there would be 7 good years but they would be preceded by 7 lean years. And it was cyclical. She told Allan about it, and he helped Mindy interpret this dream and *build a plan of action*. Allan’s approach was a stroke of genius.
- *Allan helped Mindy plant a garden, and then he helped her take care of that garden during both the good and the lean years. Many fruits and vegetables *sprang up miraculously from the ground in great abundance*. This garden *was able to feed many people* and also feed many animals. *It become known the world over*, (or, at least among their friends in and around San Jose).*
4. A community of which the Berkowitz’s had become members was headed up by a woman named *Beth*. Her last name was *David*. *Beth David* owned a very large home. This community held *regularly scheduled formal meetings every Saturday morning* in Beth’s home. Unfortunately, this community was constantly plagued by a certain member of the community who told *awful jokes, even sometimes in the middle of their formal weekly meetings*. He usually sat in the same place in Beth’s house. Beth and the rest of the community didn’t know how to stop this member from telling these jokes, and it was important *because Allan loved these jokes might not move to the promised land!* The community had to do something. They asked for guidance.
- *Unfortunately, as is sometimes the case, God would not solve the bad joke problem directly, saying the people would have to solve this one for themselves. (It’s a theme I learned repeatedly in Allan’s *Approachable Torah* class.)*
 - *A group of Rabbits had been captured *by the community* over the years by using a large net. It was called a *Rabbit-net*.¹ Now, not everyone could become a Rabbit. To become a Rabbit, a person had to be very well educated and study extensively. Allan was a Rabbit, but there were others: Dan, Philip, Jaymee, Nathan, Shoshana, and Ilana were also Rabbits.*
 - *One day, there were enough Rabbits at a regular Saturday morning meeting to convene a court made up entirely of Rabbits. They could review the actions of this person telling these bad jokes. You see, a court of Rabbits had the power to expel this joker from the community.*
 - *But while the Rabbits *threatened expulsion*, they *procrastinated*. The joker therefore deemed the *threat of excommunication* to be an idle one, and so the jokes continued.*
 - *But then a funny thing happened: some of the Rabbits also started telling jokes. Then other members who were not Rabbits heard the jokes, and *they also started telling jokes*. Soon, many people were telling jokes. Upon reflection, this was interpreted to be a good thing, because *it brought the entire community closer together through humor*.*
 - *How do I know all this? It’s simple: *groans were often overheard*.*
5. Over the years, there was a significant increase in gasoline prices inhibiting long commutes by people to get to their jobs as slaves. This could inhibit Mindy and Allan’s retirement because they wanted the freedom to travel. What were they to do? Could they ask God for help? Why not?

¹ Due to Shel Finkelstein
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- God heard their plea, and sent his chosen angel down to earth, who created a new type of vehicle called an “EV”, which didn’t consume *any* gas. The angel’s name was Elon. He released the most popular EV in history.
 - But as it turns out, Elon was very *unpopular*. His EV was very expensive, and because of these and other reasons, other alternatives sprang up, thereby expanding the market. Allan *bought one of these alternatives*, and liked it a lot (although his particular EV had some technical difficulties that were eventually corrected by the manufacturer under warranty).
6. But even though Allan *had had the foresight* to purchase an EV thereby reducing his *personal gas consumption*, overall *traffic congestion* continued to increase. If they *could* eventually escape from San Jose to the promised land in the north, would traffic still be a problem inhibiting them from travelling? So again, Allan and Mindy prayed to God to help find a solution.
- God sent another prophet, named “BART”, to invent a *new method of transportation* that in theory could reduce traffic congestion. Sorry, I don’t remember BART’s last name. Maybe he didn’t have one. When BART’s invention worked, it worked very well, but sometimes, *it didn’t work at all*, causing people to resort to older methods of transportation resulting in an increase in traffic congestion.
 - In fact, frustratingly, *for some unknown reason*, BART didn’t work *at all* in San Jose. *No one could figure why this was, or how to solve this problem*.
7. It was normal during this time that people were often enslaved by financial chains that prevented migration. This was often caused by someone whose nickname was *Morty*. I found out later that his actual name was Mort Gage.
- God found someone to bribe Morty, which allowed the Berkowitz’s to break their financial chains. The individuals sent by God to bribe Morty had the last name “Buyer”. Mr. and Mrs. Buyer, with the stroke of a pen, freed Mindy and Allan by *somehow satisfying* Morty. This allowed Mindy and Allan to cast off their financial chains and it removed another obstruction that was preventing them from migrating north.
8. But there was a also health plague. It was named Co-vid, which as we realized later was named for its lasting effect, *COllaborative-VIDeo*.² Seriously, many people feared Covid. Many people died. The community prayed.
- But this plague was relatively easy for God to solve. God provided a special potion, produced by two of his angels, one named Pfizer and one named Moderna. But here God drew another line: it was again up to the *people themselves* to take the potion. We don’t know why, as it was God’s will, but against God’s advice, some people would not take the potion offered by *either* of the prophets.
 - Eventually though, enough people took the potion from one or the other, and the plague died out. But it was a *slow proces*.
9. Every year, a war broke out affecting the north. The war was between the *Army of the King of Sacramento* in the East, and the *Warrior Tribe of the Golden State* in the West, making the land in the north a very dangerous place in which to live. *The Berkowitz’s were actually moving into a war zone!* The King of Sacramento in the east and the Warriors of the Golden State in the west had been actively fighting. Should the Berkowitz’s knowingly enter into this dangerous territory? It was a significant cause of worry.

² Due to Bob Metcalf
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- But, this turned out to be an easy problem for God to solve. You see, the Warriors of the Golden State were fed a *unique spice* that made them very powerful. It was a certain type of Curry, and it made them an *exceptional force to be reckoned with*.
 - God had a simple solution to end the war. God *neutralized the curry*, thereby weakening the Warriors, allowing the King of Sacramento's army to defeat the Warriors of the Golden State, which in turn allowed the Berkowitz's to travel to the promised land in the north in safety, eventually settling there.
10. But there was *one final hurdle*. To escape to the north, Mindy and Allan would have to cross the *dangerous Guadeloupe Sea*. It was dangerous because the Guadeloupe Sea was infested with *many viscious sharks*. The most viscous species of sharks indigenous to the Guadeloupe Sea could be very fast, very powerful, and very nasty. They were also prone to frequently fight. This species were known as the "San Jose Sharks".
- But God had a plan and came to the rescue: God removed all the teeth in all the sharks and this caused them to slow down as they became weaker from hunger. This allowed the Berkowitz's to *safely cross the Guadelupe Sea*.
 - Later, to correct this injustice to the sharks, *and in an act of benevolence*, God allowed the teeth of these sharks to grow back. Time will tell whether the teeth will grow in properly and make them stronger. (They might need braces).

Summing up:

In summary, Mindy and Allan were able to safely flee the land of San Jose and settle in the promised land in the north. They could travel on the internet superhighway in their special zoom vehicles, doing good deeds, freed from slavery, retaining all their friends, and also living alongside their families.

And they lived happily ever after.

Shabbat Shalom