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A Miracle Jewish Adoption Story

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ALL POSTS

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Dec 30, 2018

Anti-Se…

Nov 28, 2018

Life Ha…

Nov 3, 2018

Miracles. Why do we all love miracles? Movies, books, and songs have used miracles as a theme, plot line, or event. It is the best kind of drama that works every single time and a solid a reason to believe in God as anything. But what is central to most, if not all this drama...hopelessness. It is the feeling that all is lost and no help in sight. The end of the road. We know the Egyptians are coming and there are no possibility of escape...but we do, says God. They're called one of his greatest of gifts to mankind: **miracles**.

But there is a secret to miracles and how to create more miracles in your life. Typically, when a miracle occurs in your life, you feel relieved and even thankful. The crisis is over, and we can move on. But that is where we fall short. The real secret most people fail to acknowledge is the amazing act of the miracle itself. If we shift our focus to how mind boggling a miracle is, then we get to appreciate God's power. We can see the difference between a reality of having God's influence in our daily lives or not. The more we see how unique and amazing God's work is through his miracles, the more miracles come your way. The reason is because of our friend, "certainty". It adds secret fuel to the fire.

Both my kids were adopted. It was during that adoption that I truly found God, and it too was revealed through a miracle. Here is the story...

It was a very cold, wintery morning as my wife and I arrived in Almaty, Kazakhstan. We had gone through too many hours of non-sleep airplane rides from California, arriving in this third world country that 99 percent of Americans never even heard of. I thought for sure I was in the middle of some black and white movie of the fifties, as the ugly American center-staged in some bizarre adventure. Thank God, I am a seasoned traveler and trusted in my New York savviness to maneuver me through this new and strange setting as we arrived in the airport, reminiscent of the airport in the movie “Casablanca”.

After finally getting up from our seats I dared not make eye contact with my wife for fear she would see a crack in my persona of confidence. This persona was all I had left that kept me intact.

Coming down the steps of this out-of-date Russian plane I nervously scanned the crowd hoping to catch the eye of a person looking for two very

out-of-place Americans. Believe me, my heart was pounding. And whatever that magnetic energy we humans possess to connect to that searching counterpart, it zoomed in on this attractive woman with a very warm and welcoming smile.

“Are you Mr. and Mrs. Horowitz?”

Those words instantly deflated my anxiety. I responded with a confident, “Yes.” To myself I said, “Thank you, God!”

But of course, life can never be so easy because in her marginal English, she said, “We’ll check into the hotel tonight and catch another plane tomorrow to the orphanage.” Yes, another flight, another day of travel. And so, it went.

The following morning, we boarded a Russian 1950’s military prop plane. I can’t say it was converted for commercial use; it was just used for commercial use. The metal seats attested to its origin. Anyway, off we went for a memorable three-hour flight thinking all along we’d probably have to take this very plane again on the way back!

It was still early that cold November morning. The car pulled through the

heavy wrought iron gates to what looked like an old brick factory building of the early sixties vintage in New York's lower East Side. The anticipation was unimaginable. Ahead, in that old building, on an ice-cold morning with smoke steaming out of various pipes, was housed my new family.

The three of us were quickly ushered through a door into narrow hallways filled with the scurry of women carrying anything from towels to clothes, to who knows what. Finally, we all arrived at the office of the director of the orphanage.

Out stepped this well-dressed woman in her late forties to early fifties with a firm but nice, welcoming smile. Barely having time to catch my breath, our interpreter said that the director was happy to see us arriving safely, but there was no time to waste. We needed to claim our daughter and then pick out our son. "What, seriously. Pick out our son?", I said.

"First let's see your daughter who's upstairs in the nursery," responded the interpreter. So, without hesitation, off we went.

As a side note, our daughter, Skye was spoken for months in advance and was

eight months old. We'd wanted a boy as well, but they said back at our adoption center in New York that there were plenty of boys of suitable age to choose from. They said that would can be decided on after a while when we got there. Of course, the key wordings were, "after a while".

Upstairs, we entered the nursery where our new baby was crying in her crib. A nurse hovered over her with a very worried look. They told us she had been throwing up the formula they gave her and was dehydrating. My anxiety levels skyrocketed. But my wife, Marsha, who seemed knowledgeable about this kind of thing, calmly asked if they could get goats milk. They nodded, yes. Hey, of course, we were in Kazakhstan where goats roamed the streets! It seemed like it took only moments before the goat's milk was in hand, and Skye was happily sucking it up with no trouble. At this point, Marsha took full charge of our new baby girl. Welcome to instant fatherhood!

Marsha, with the baby in her arms, myself, our interpreter, and a nurse, all scuttled downstairs as if time was of the essence. We were greeted by the director again, who stood in front of the

large open room filled with little boys and a firm smile. The director spoke in Russian to our interpreter and what came out will forever be branded in my memory. Mr. Horowitz? “Time to pick out your son.”

My face went flushed as I looked over to my wife holding tightly onto Skye. “Now?” I eked out. “Yes,” the director said in perfect English. “That’s how we do it here.” It’s was as defining a moment as any man can ever have.

Holding on to her words, shook me to my core. How was I going to pick out a small child in ten minutes’ time, and say, “Hey you. You are now my son till death do us part!”

I needed a moment...by myself.

Without saying a word, they watched as I went off and turned the corner of the hallway. Halfway down I stopped and stood alone in my silence, terrified.

This was truly a dream, a moment out of a classic film, or at best some kind of mistake. My logical mind couldn’t grasp how bizarre this all was. How could I possibly make such a decision that would affect my life, his life, Marsha’s life, just like that?! It was absurd, and totally crazy!

Finding God can be shocking. Because it was at that moment and totally out of character, I said to myself, “God, please help me, please show me a sign!” Whether I just took those words from a book I once read, or from somewhere else, I don’t know. But those were the words that came to me. And with a false sense of confidence, I walked back with everyone’s eyes fixed on me. I said, “I think I’m ready.”

Trust me, I couldn’t make this up. It really happened.

So, now coming slowly toward us, three little boys all around 3-4 years of age. They walked cautiously, almost arm in arm, shy and deathly quiet. Intently, I looked for a sign, but nothing happened... Nothing but blank eyes and forlorn faces.

A second group of three boys of the same ages walked up to us, staring with their deep, dark eyes and little to no expression. I turned toward my wife with nothing more than an anxious look. How could this be real? The boys were asked to turn around and go back. The feelings I felt rejecting these kids could never be expressed in words. It may have well been my lowest moment in my life. Sadness falls

way too short as a word.

A third set of boys came toward us, with one boy's arm in a sling. From the corner of my eye, I saw Marsha wiping a tear or two as she held our new baby girl very close and secure to her chest.

And, just as I turned back to those boys, something happened...

This one child looked straight into my eyes and smiled. It was so broad and brightly lit up it made me freeze as if time itself had stopped. He didn't stop smiling. His bright eyes were so alive, so full of happiness, it was as if God Himself was being revealed through him. To this day I am convinced He was.

I was totally transfixed. I just couldn't stop looking. Suddenly, Marsha nudged me and as if to awaken me from a dream. I turned to her and said, "He's our boy; he's the one."

That was my miracle. It was also the moment when I truly found God, and my amazing son, Anton. Thank you, God!

Since then I have learned that miracles occur in all shapes and sizes. In fact, I have grown to understand that every

second we are alive is a miracle. Though less dramatic, the miracle of Skye coming into our lives is as remarkable and as profound as Anton's story.

She is perfect in every way. Loving, kind, a gifted artist, an amazing singer, and someone who loves me and her brother unconditionally, not to mention Marsha, her mom. The most critical point here is to have the ability and the awareness to see these all with immense appreciation. Without appreciation, miracles seem to vanish before our very eyes. These extraordinary gifts become as mere events with no sparkle or knowledge as being gifts of any kind.

The truth of the matter: other kinds of miracles occur in our lives all the time. The only thing is, we may not be aware of them. They are called, "the unseen or unknown miracles".

Of course, we have all heard stories about people missing planes only to find out that the plane they missed crashed. They didn't ask for the miracle. They didn't even want to be the cause of those miracles, because of those who were less fortunate. But nonetheless, they are bona fide

miracles, and their meanings can be well hid by God, Himself.

In short, it is all about opening our eyes to life itself. The simple to the complex. Miracles are all around us; it is just a simple choice to see it that way.

Sanford Horowitz

From his book "Life at 70; Pedal to the Metal", a self-help book for seniors, recently been published through Amazon in both eBook and paperback.

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