

**When Hearing Becomes Action: The Connection**  
**between Yitro & Nicholas Winton**

(5 - 8min.)

In December 1938, as the world was on the brink of war, a young British stockbroker named Nicholas Winton had planned a ski trip to Switzerland. But fate had other plans. A desperate phone call from a friend changed everything. **"Cancel your vacation, Nick. Come to Prague. You need to see what's happening here."**

Intrigued and unsettled, Winton boarded a train to Czechoslovakia. What he saw upon arrival shook him to his core. Thousands of Jewish families were trapped, their futures uncertain as Nazi forces loomed closer. Parents begged, pleaded, and clung to the hope that someone—anyone—would help save their children.

The world knew what was happening. Reports of Hitler's growing aggression were in newspapers. Politicians debated policies. People shook their heads, and said their sympathies, and moved on. But Winton was different. He didn't just *hear*. *He understood* the urgency and *accepted* the responsibility as his own.

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Without any formal authority, he sprang into action. He set up an office in his hotel room, drafting lists of children in need of rescue. When governments refused visas, he forged documents. When obstacles arose, he outmaneuvered them. He bribed officials, worked day and night, and persuaded British families to take in children they had never met.

Train by train, he smuggled them out 669 children, each one plucked from the jaws of death. And then, when war erupted, the final train—carrying 250 more children—was stopped. The Nazis had sealed the borders. Those children were never seen again.

For decades, Winton never spoke of his heroism. The documents of his operation sat in an old briefcase, forgotten, until his wife discovered them in 1988. When the world finally learned of what he had done, he was invited to a television show, where he unknowingly sat among the very children he had saved—now adults with families of their own. When the host asked **"Is there anyone in this room who owes their life to Nicholas Winton?"**, dozens stood. Winton, a man who had always worked in silence, broke down in tears.

What did Yitro hear that was so special? The sages tell us that he heard about the miraculous crossing of the *Yam Suf* and the war with Amalek. But these were not hidden events—*the entire world* heard about them. So what made Yitro different?

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Unlike others who acknowledged the news and moved on, Yitro *truly listened*. He didn't just *hear*—he *understood* and *accepted* the deeper meaning behind these events. He recognized Hashem's presence in the world and acted upon that realization.

This is the essence of *Shema Yisrael*—to 1) hear, 2) understand, and 3) accept that Hashem is the one true God. Many of Yitro's peers had access to the same knowledge, but only he internalized it and transformed his life because of it.

The greatest lesson from Yitro is that hearing alone is not enough. We must have the wisdom to understand and the courage to act. True hearing leads to transformation.

Shabbat Shalom!