**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas toldos 5776**

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**The Challenges of Being**

**A Gracious Yom Tov Host**

**By David Seidemann**

My family has a wonderful practice of having local yeshiva boys grace our Shabbos and Yom Tov table. It is a rarity when our family dines alone. We feel so fortunate to be able to host these young men who hail from all across the globe. Over the years we have developed wonderful relationships.

Last Shavuos we entertained one young man who had been to our home for meals on many prior occasions. As we began our evening meal, we noticed that he was moving his food around on his plate without actually eating.

I initially thought that he didn’t particularly like my wife’s menu or perhaps was suffering from a stomachache or maybe was still full from lunch. It was only after about an hour or so that he confessed to us that while my wife was serving dairy, six hours had not yet elapsed from the conclusion of his meat lunch, and he therefore could not eat the dairy.

My wife immediately found chicken in the refrigerator and warmed it up; as they say, “no harm, yes fowl.”

Afterwards I pointed out to my daughters how thoughtful and respectful this young man was, as he was so careful to disguise his predicament in order not to make his hosts uncomfortable. I told them, “What goes around comes around,” and they can be sure that history will repeat itself one day and that he will be repaid for his kindness.

Fast-forward to this past Sukkos. We had this same young man at our home for the first night of Sukkos. At the conclusion of the meal, we invited him for lunch on Simchas Torah. We told him that services at our shul run late on Simchas Torah and that he should arrive at our home for lunch at 3:30 p.m.

But shul ended at 1:00 p.m. that Simchas Torah and we returned home to eat. No one remembered that we had invited this young man for lunch. We ate as soon as we got home, and by 2:15 p.m. my wife and I were both asleep. At 3:30, the young man knocked at the door, anticipating lunch. My children, without missing a beat, set the table and roused us from our nap. Once at the table, we made Kiddush, washed, cut into challah, and ate our second lunch of the day.

This is one article I hope our guest does not read.

Reprinted from the October 22, 2015 edition of the Five Towns Jewish Times. David Seidemann is a partner with the law firm of Seidemann and Mermelstein and serves as a professor of business law at Touro College.

[**When the Mets Raised $500 for Yeshiva of Eastern Parkway**](http://matzav.com/when-the-mets-raised-500-for-yeshiva-of-eastern-parkway/)

**By Rabbi Ron Yitzchok Eisenman**

***[](http://matzav.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/mets.png)***

As I glanced at the news, I could not help but notice the headline: “Miracle Mets are Headed to the World Series!” The New York Mets would be heading to the World Series for the first time since 2000. Although it’s been years since I have followed baseball, as I looked at the headline my mind waxed nostalgic as I recalled the ‘original’ Miracle Mets of 1969.

Perhaps even more importantly, I remembered ‘me’ and who I was from that long ago time. It was a grand time when the Mets won the World Series in 1969. It was a time of excitement and of hope. If the Mets could win the World Series, could Mashiach be far behind?

The 1969 Mets were everything a Jewish child could want. They had a Jewish player by the name of Art Shamsky who was the hero of every Jewish kid in Brooklyn! Gil Hodges, the manager lived on Bedford Avenuein Flatbush. My brother and I would bike to his house and if we saw him on the porch or picking up the paper from his lawn we would shout, “Let’s Go Mets!” He would smile and wave and life was great.

It was a time of racial turmoil in the city and it was a time when Jewish neighborhoods such as East Flatbush were in flux. And when the Yeshiva of Eastern Parkway was badly burned in an arson attack and suffered $200,000 worth of damage, it was only natural that the Mets raised $500 for the rebuilding of the yeshiva. Rav Meilech Silber, who was then Rosh Yeshiva, arrived at Shea Stadium on May 28, 1969 to receive the check and presented Gil Hodges and Art Shamsky a Seder plate as a show of gratitude.

By May 28th, the Mets had played 41 games and their win/loss record was 18-23. Beginning with the game which was played immediately after Rav Silber received the $500 check from Gil Hodges, the Mets reeled off a club-record 11 straight wins. Starting with that 42nd game, the Mets’ win/loss record rebounded to 82-39, an impressive .678 winning percentage! Eventually of course, they would go on to win the World Series against the mighty Orioles of Baltimore.

My Rebbe at yeshiva taught us that Tzedokah can help bring about miracles. What could be more of an affirmation of his teaching than the fact that hours after the Mets give Tzedokah they [began] winning 11 straight games!

Those were special, simpler times. It was a time when a Jewish baseball player named Shamsky would not play on Rosh Hashanah and a Catholic man named Hodges from Bedford Avenue could give $500 to help build a Yeshiva. And it was a time when a red-headed pudgy little boy went to sleep at night feeling safe and secure. His parents and brother were in the adjacent rooms and the Mets were winning.

What else could a boy want from life?

As I write these lines I realize that I am now ‘whiter’ than I am red… My parents are no longer in this world and life is certainly more complicated. I wonder, ‘Can I ever recapture the pristine innocence of youth?’ I doubt it.

Those were the days….

Reprinted from the October 30, 2015 website of Matzav.com (Editor’s Note: Unfortunately for the New York Mets, 2015 was not another 1969 miracle year and they lost the World Series to the Kansas City Royals in five games.)

**The Meeting**

[**As told by Yanki Tauber**](http://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/90/jewish/Yanki-Tauber.htm)

 To the town of Shchedrin there arrived a messenger, sent by the leading rabbis of the day, to raise money for a worthy cause. A meeting was convened by the town’s elders to discuss how to aid the guest in his holy mission.

At the meeting it was suggested that the messenger be accompanied in his door-to-door visits by a respected member of the community. This way, those who would give only grudgingly to a stranger might be more generous in the presence of someone they knew and respected.

All faces naturally turned to Reb Peretz the mill-owner, who neatly fitted the bill: learned, pious and wealthy, he was by far the most prestigious burgher in the room.

Reb Peretz, however, was not quite as enthusiastic. “Listen,” he finally said, “I was thinking: how much will we collect by knocking on the door of every small-time shopkeeper and wagon-driver? I know this town. I estimate that we will raise, at most, eighteen silver rubles. I’ll tell you what—I’m ready to contribute the eighteen rubles myself, if you’ll exempt me from this ‘honor’ . . .”

Present at the meeting was the town’s rabbi, Rabbi Shaul DovBer Zislin. At this point, Rabbi Shaul DovBer interrupted. “Reb Peretz,” he said, “you just explained something that was puzzling me all evening. I was wondering: why was this meeting called? Surely the dear Jews of Shchedrin are charitable souls, who will give whatever they can to a worthy cause. Why didn’t the messenger simply go about his rounds, raising the money?

“I’ll tell you why. When our friend came to town, the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) was frantic. Hundreds of mitzvot were about to be performed in Shchedrin! Never mind the eighteen rubles that will be raised—considering the sums of money that the *yetzer hara* deals with, this is a mere pittance. But the mitzvot! Yankel the water-carrier, Shepsel the innkeeper, Mina the laundress, and hundreds of others, are going to joyfully give their hard-earned pennies to aid their brethren in distress. What work awaited the *yetzer hara*! He must now finagle his way into the heart of each of Shchedrin’s precious Jews and seek to dampen their generosity, to convince them to reduce their contribution or to refuse the messenger altogether, G‑d forbid.

“Then the *yetzer hara* had an idea. Call a meeting! Yes—call a meeting of Shchedrin’s influential householders, a meeting to aid the messenger in his holy mission. At this meeting, it will inevitably be suggested that Reb Peretz accompany the messenger to stimulate an even more generous response. Now, the *yetzer hara*’s job will be much, much easier—all he has to do is to convince Reb Peretz to give the eighteen rubles himself…

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5776 email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**A Final Tour of the World**

**For a Terminally Sick Boy**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

Chassidim are Jews that are happy to serve their creator. In the book "The Tanya" it is explained that Abraham, the first Jew, although it went against every fiber of his being, was actually 'happy' to sacrifice his son Yitzchak and this 'joy' is what made him the father of Judaism. (Igerot HaKodesh Chapt 21). Therefore Chassidim make 'Farbringens'.

The scene; some thirty years ago in the central synagogue of the Chabad Chassidim in Brooklyn. Hundreds of Chassidim of all ages gathered (as they do every Shabbat now-a-days as well) to make a 'farbringin'; a gathering replete with singing, dancing, words of Torah, Chassidic stories and, of course, 'LeChiams' (usually vodka).

The spirits were high when a young man, a Chassid in his early twenties stood up, cleared his throat and announced. "I have a miracle story about the Rebbe!

He was referring to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Shneerson, and although there are thousands of such stories everyone was very eager to hear another.

"The story begins in Israel" He said. "A ten year old boy, we'll call him Yoni, from a wealthy Israeli family suddenly began suffering from severe headaches. He was taken for an examination and was diagnosed as having a malignant tumor. Of course the family was turned upside down on the spot and they began radiation and chemo-therapy treatments.

"Money was no problem, but it seems all the money in the world couldn't help. After months of painful and debilitating X-rays and chemicals with no positive results the doctors finally advised them to stop trying, accept their fate, leave the hospital and just spend the few precious months they had together….. perhaps traveling the world.

"Yoni's father and mother cancelled all their business and social plans and in no time their bags were packed and they were all on their way to Europe. They saw Paris, London, and Rome, traveled in the Alps and across Spain and flew to New York with the rest of the U.S.A and South America before them on the itinerary.

"On the second day of their stay in Manhattan they were walking down Fifth Avenue when through the noise and traffic something caught the boy's attention. A camper-truck decorated with all sorts of colorful pictures and loudspeakers blaring happy clarinet music from its roof was parked at the side of the street with several bearded young Chassidim standing by its open door talking to people on the sidewalk. Yoni told his father he wanted to see.

"As they were approaching one of the Chassidim looked at Yoni's father and called out "Hello my friend! Are you Jewish?"

"The blood rose to his head.' Jewish?!' He scoffed under his breath. Let him go to Israel and join the ARMY!! That's Jewish!!' Yoni's father, like so many Israelis, was allergic to religious Jews. He took his son's hand and began to walk away. 'Let's keep moving Yoni! Let's see something else."

"But the boy's curiosity had been aroused.

"But daddy, aren't we Jewish? What's wrong with being Jewish? Who are these people?' "When the Chassid understood they were Israelis he exclaimed, also in Hebrew.

"'Ahhh! Boruch HaShem! Jews from the Holy Land! Welcome to America!!' He said, grabbing Yoni's dad's hand and shaking it vigorously.

"'Nu! What do you want?' Yoni's father asked angrily. He was irritated but he didn't want Yoni to see it.

"'I want you to put on Tefillin!' said the Chassid with a warm smile. 'It won't hurt, you'll enjoy it, Jews have been doing it for over three thousand years, it doesn't cost money, it only takes two minutes, it's the best buy in Manhattan and your son wants you to do it! Right Yoni?' (He had heard the boy's father call him by his name).

The boy looked up at his father with big goggly eyes and shook his head 'yes' and of course the poor man had no choice but to comply.

It wasn't long before they were talking and the conversation got around to Yoni's condition.

"Wow! I'm sorry to hear he isn't feeling well.' said the young man. But I don't think you should give up so easily. G-d forbid!! First get to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He has saved people in worse shape. Give it a try!! Here! He doesn't take money. You have nothing to lose. Here is the telephone number and the address. Call up and ask for one of the Rebbe's secretaries. You know what? Here is my phone number. Call me and I'll arrange a meeting, I'll talk with the secretaries. I guarantee it will work and well…why not? In any case, you're sight seeing, right? So this will be another sight.

"That evening the boy's parents talked it over and decided to give it a try. The next morning they called the young man, went to the Rebbe's headquarters in Crown Hights and got an appointment to see the Rebbe that evening.

"That night at twelve o'clock they were in the Rebbe's large room, surrounded by four walls of full bookcases, seated before the Rebbe's desk with Yoni's X-ray's and medical papers spread out before them.

"The Rebbe examined some of the documents looked up at Yoni's father and said.

"'I don't see anything so serious. It's just a problem of diet. If he begins to eat only kosher food he will be perfectly healthy.'

"Yoni's father looked at the Rebbe in wide-eyed disbelief. He knew that religious Jews are superstitious and ignorant, but this was really going overboard!!

This so-called great Rabbi is not just contradicting the greatest doctors in the world, he's contradicting common sense!!

"He stood up, coldly shook the Rebbe's hand, took the boy by the hand, shot a glance at his wife and they left the room.

"He was blazing mad!!!  'Nothing serious!! Just a matter of diet!' he said over and over as they left the building shaking his head in disbelief. 'Ha! I'd like to go back to that young fool that we met on the street and bust him one in the face!!

"But his wife didn't exactly agree. "Maybe there is something to what he says.' She said as they returned to their hotel room. 'After all, we really don't have anything to lose. And he didn't ask for money. Maybe we should give it a try.'

"The next day she bought kosher food from a local market and wouldn't let her husband take them to a non-kosher restaurant. She kept it up for a few days until one day Yoni said he felt strange.

"His father made an appointment with the top specialist of the nearest hospital rushed his son there and in less than an hour the professor was looking at the X-rays.

"'A definite improvement!' he murmured, obviously impressed. 'What type of a treatment is he taking? Who is treating him? I have to admit I've never seen anything quite like it!'

"Yoni's father burst out into tears and his mother grabbed her son and began kissing him

"'It was the Rabbi!! I knew he was right!!' she said and began weeping as well.

"When they returned several months later to Israel Yoni was completely cured of his disease and his parents were cured from being non-observant Jews."

"Nice story?" Everyone thought that the young man had finished. But he hadn't.

"Just one more thing" he concluded to people in the 'farbringen'. "I am Yoni! I'm the boy that was saved by the Rebbe's blessing ten years ago!" He announced with a beaming smile.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5776 email from Yeshiva Kfar Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**Reb Yitzchak of Drohvitch**

Reb Yitzchak of Drohvitch lived in the time of the Baal Shem Tov. He was a maggid in the city of Brod and then in Ostroho, and was known as a very holy person. His son became the famous talmid of the Baal Shem Tov - Reb Michel of Zlotchov.

Reb Yitzchak once said: “When I want to go speak to Yidden about mending their ways, the Yetzer Hara comes to me and says ‘Yitzchak, sit at home and learn! Why should you travel and waste time from your learning.’

So I tell him I am going to make a little money. ‘Oh,’ he tells me, ‘then you should go, that’s an important mitzvah.’ When I arrive at my destination, I drop the guise and do what I need to do. Reb Yitzchak concluded “Sometimes when one wants to do a” mitzvah, one has to be clever to get past the Yetzer Hara. “

When Reb Michel of Zlotchov came to the Baal Shem Tov, the Baal Shem Tov gave orders to show him respect, saying: “You should know that this man is the son of the holy Reb Yitzchak of Drohvitch. His father did not have a lofty neshama. In fact, almost no one in that generation possessed such a plain neshama. Only with his tireless efforts did he elevate it to the level akin to that of Rebbi Shimon.”

Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5776 email of Sparks of Light, a publication of The Baal Shem Tov Library in Flatbush.

**L’Maaseh… A Tale to Remember**

**The Consequences of Expelling a Mischievous**

**Child from the Cheder**

Rabbi Paysach Krohn relates the following story: Sometime before the Communist Revolution of 1917, there was a Cheder Rebbe who tried with great effort to control a very rambunctious student, in the small group of children he used to teach in the back of the local Shul. Everyday this boy had a mischievous prank up his sleeve.

But it was not until one day, when this child pulled his worst prank, that the Rebbe decided he couldn’t handle this child’s tricks anymore. Early one morning, before anyone arrived at Shul, this boy brought a small baby goat in to the Shul, and hid it in the Aron HaKodesh.

Soon, the children arrived, but they couldn’t hear the sounds of the frightened goat because it was drowned out by their Davening. When it came time to open the Aron to read the Torah, the little goat jumped out of the Aron and started running around the Shul!

The Rebbi nearly fainted from fright while the rest of the children howled with laughter. Before the Rebbe had caught the goat and regained control of the children, he had figured out who the culprit behind this was. He told the young troublemaker to follow him, and he went and brought him directly to the Rav of the town. This boy’s history was well known, and this latest stunt was the last straw.

The Rebbi told the boy that he was going to be expelled from the Cheder, but there was a slight restriction. No child in that part of Russia could be expelled from a Jewish Cheder without the explicit consent of Rav Shalom Dov Ber Schneerson, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe.

When the child was brought before the Rebbe and his teacher detailed his past history and the current episode, the Rebbe explained to the child that given the situation, there was no choice but to agree with the teacher, and he had to leave the Cheder.

The boy listened intently and then looked up and asked, “Rebbe, may I say something in my defense?” The Rebbe agreed.

“Rebbe,” the boy explained with a sense of urgency, “If you throw me out of Cheder, you are also throwing out my children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren for all eternity! What did they do wrong to deserve to be thrown out of Cheder?”

The Rebbe was stunned by the remark of this child, and indeed, the Rebbe retracted his decision and allowed the boy to continue. Rabbi Krohn adds that this tale was told over at an engagement party, and one of the Mechutanim jumped up and said, “This is no fairy tale. The boy in the story is my great grandfather! Who knows where I would be today without his youthful foresight for his future family, and the compassion of the Rebbe to allow him to stay in Cheder?”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5776 email of “Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights” compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**The Baba Sali and the Young Man Injured in the Yom Kippur War**

Rabbi Scheinbaum writes a beautiful story about the power of Brachos from a Gadol. A young man from a secular background once came before the Baba Sali, zt”l. This man was in a wheelchair, as a result of an injury he sustained as a soldier in the Yom Kippur War. He had one leg that was mobile, and the other leg was completely paralyzed, leaving him to rely on a wheelchair for mobility.

He came before the sage to seek his blessing.

The Baba Sali asked him, “Do you put on Tefilin every day?” The young man replied that he did not.

“Do you observe Shabbos?” Once again, the answer was in the negative.

If this is the case, it’s a small wonder that you have the use of one leg. Consider it as a gift from Hashem. The strength we have to function originates from Hashem. If we do not carry out His will, how can we expect to exist?”

When the young man heard these stern words, he began to weep uncontrollably. The Baba Sali looked at him and asked, “If I Bentch you with health, will you accept upon yourself the Yoke of Hashem’s Mitzvos?”

The young man replied, “Yes! Yes!”

The Baba Sali then said, “Hold onto my hands, and I will Bentch you.”

The young man did as he was told, received a Brachah from the Baba Sali, and then kissed the hands of the great Rabbi. The Baba Sali instructed him, “Rise up from your chair and walk across the room!” To everyone’s surprise, and to the shock of the young man, he was able to walk! He crossed the room on his own, without any assistance, as if he never had an impairment.

Later, the Baba Sali remarked to his grandson, “When a Jew accepts on himself to correct his shortcomings, the force of the Emunah of his acceptance will intercede before Hashem to grant him a miracle!” True belief in Hashem generates a true response from Hashem!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5776 email of “Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights” compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Story #936**

**The First Match**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/5?session_redirect=true&userinfo=eff1e795994608ed6885dfdeac88e827&count=1446670750&randid=194346782)

A recently-widowed chasid named Meir walked and tramped for many days in order to spend the festivals in the court of his Rebbe, **Rabbi Moshe-Zvi of Sevran**. When it was time to take leave and he was admitted to the Rebbe's room, he told about the difficulties he was having finding a wife. Because he was a poor Torah scholar and a widow, no one wanted him.

"Go in peace," said the Rebbe, blessing him. "I advise you to accept the first marriage proposition that is suggested to you." He also gave him a bit of money for the trip.

On his way home the chasid decided to stay the night in a village inn. In the dining area he found a group of loafers with nothing better to do than wasting their time in drinking and foolish jesting. Being cold from his journey, and not wanting to socialize, he found a seat in a corner next to the stove. He tried to be unobtrusive, but the mischief-makers spotted him right away and asked him where he was from and what was his business. He gave them the name of his home town, and told them that he had just visited the Rebbe of Sevran.

"What did you want from the Rebbe, and what did he answer you?" they pried.

Meir naively told them everything: "I asked the Rebbe to pray that the Al-mighty arrange that I meet my marriage partner, and he told me that I should agree to the first match that was proposed to me."

At this, one of the party jumped up and exclaimed: "Excellent! I have a first-class match for you. My sister is a young divorcee, very nice, and she happens to be in the kitchen, right now! Wait here and I'll tell her. Then I'll bring her out, and if you are agreeable, we can shake hands on it."

Now in fact this good-for-nothing was in no way related to the young woman; she was the daughter of the wealthy innkeeper, who was not in town at the time.

The prankster ran into the kitchen, explained the joke to her and asked her to play her role, saying it would be excellent for the inn's business, as many celebratory drinks would certainly be ordered. She innocently agreed, and followed her 'brother' out into the main room where he introduced pair to each other.

"*Nu*, Rabbi, what do you say?" asked the smiling matchmaker.

Meir answered coolly: "Fine; I agree."

All present greeted his decision with loud cheers and applause. Many ordered vodka with which to treat the chasid on the occasion of his unconventional engagement, and had a great time toasting l'chaim and offering him their blessings, all the while snickering behind his back.

After a while, when the boisterousness had begun to die down, one of the loiterers came up with a further suggestion: "Why don't we arrange the marriage ceremony straight away? Then we can throw a really tremendous party!"

Someone else at his table objected: "But none of our crowd knows how to draw up the marriage contract and conduct the ceremony."

"What a pity. We could have had such a great time."

Meir, overhearing them, promptly volunteered that he knew both to write the *ketubah* and supervise the *chupah*. This unexpected participation by the religious sucker gave them even more cause for mirth. They took a clean tablecloth and held it up with four broomsticks over the heads of the couple as a *chupah* canopy. The chasid wrote out the *ketubah* document; and then with the inexpensive ring that someone cheerfully donated to him, he duly sanctified the giggling young lady as his lawful wedded wife "according to the religion of Moses and Israel."

All the inn's customers shouted "*Mazal tov! Mazal tov, chatan v'kallah* (bride and groom)." The groom was promptly hoisted onto the shoulders of the drunken celebrants, who bounced him up and down and twirled him around. They enjoyed their practical joke so much that after they lowered him down they tugged at his hat and long robe from all sides, made fun of him without any restraint, and even started to slap him around a bit.

Seeing how things were faring for him, the new bridegroom decided that even though it was his wedding night, it would be wise to make his escape. He snuck away and was able to arrange to sleep in the cottage of one of the gentile villagers.

In the morning he carefully crossed the threshold of the inn, wary despite the unlikelyhood that his persecutors of the nght before be already up and about. Instead he saw a well-dressed man on the other side of the room with his back to him. He asked one of the servants, who confirmed that this was indeed the owner of the inn and that his name was Zvi Velbka.

The young man approached the innkeeper, and said, "Good morning, father-in-law!"

The innkeeper was shocked at being called 'father-in-law' by this obviously impoverished and unemployed scholar. "Who are you? What are you talking about?" he demanded.

"I married your daughter last night," responded Meir quietly.

The innkeeper shouted for his daughter to come out of the kitchen. Seeing her *"chatan"* and how upset her father was, she quickly explained: "This young man has been providing us with a little entertainment. Last night we made believe and had a engagement party and marriage ceremony, just for fun! You'll be pleased with how much extra food and liquor was sold."

Her father did not like the sound of what he heard, and plied her with questions in order to find out exactly what had taken place. When he heard her answers, he burst out, "Oh,no! You silly girl!"

Turning to Meir he shouted furiously, "*Chutzpan* (impudent one)! How dare you play along with those idiots. They may not understand the implications of a *ketubah* and a wedding ceremony in front of witnesses, but if you are a chasid and a scholar as you appear, you should certainly have known that to do so constitutes a legally binding marriage under Torah law. Didn't you realize that they were making fun of you? I demand that you divorce my daughter immediately!"

To make his point clearer, he slapped the chasid across the face. Meir neither moved nor spoke; he simply shook his head 'No.'

Mr. Velbka quickly realized that he had taken the wrong appoach. " If I stay angry, he'll continue to take no notice of me," he thought to himself. "Since I'm already tied up with this pathetic pauper, I'll have to speak to him politely in order to be able to get out of this mess."

He therefore changed his tone, asked Meir to give his daughter a bill of divorce, and promised him twenty silver rubles for his trouble, a significant amount of money. To his surprise, the chasid quickly refused. He doubled and redoubled his offer, but each time with the same lack of success.

"You might as well stop trying to buy me off," said Meir finally. "Let me tell you what is really going on. My Rebbe told me to agree to the first match that was proposed to me, and that's what I did. Anyway, she seemed to be a pleasant young woman, and of good character. This crowd may have treated the whole matter as a joke, but I took it seriously. I accepted the offer, according to the Rebbe's instructions, and I certainly will not withdraw from the marriage without a specific order to do so from the Rebbe."

Upon discovering that they were both chasidim of the same Rebbe, the innkeeper said, Fine. Let us go to Sevran together and whatever he says we shall do."

When they arrived, Zvi Velbka put his complaint to the Maggid: "Last night, while I was away from home, along came this bum, believed a band of jokers who told him my daughter was their sister, and accepted their proposal to marry her. Then he himself wrote a *ketubah* and gave her a ring under the wedding canopy in front of witnesses! I want to dissolve it and I offered him some money to do so, but he won't agree without your approval. I am now willing to offer him one hundred silver rubles-a fortune for him-so long as he gives my daughter a divorce."

"If you will to retire to your lodgings," said the Rebbe, "I'll discuss the matter with Rabbi Meir."

When the innkeeper returned a few hours later, the Maggid told him: "I discussed the divorce with the *chatan*, and he is agreeable -- provided that you give him a thousand silver rubles. I will then propose an excellent respectable match that I have in mind for your daughter. The new bridegroom will bring a thousand silver rubles to supplement the dowry, so really you will lose nothing at all."

The innkeeper quickly agreed, but said that he needed a few days to prepare the sum. The Rebbe smiled and said that he also needed additional time to arrange a scribe and two witnesses.

They agreed to meet again in a week's time. Velbka returned to his inn while Meir remained in Sevran at the Rebbe's request.

The Rebbe acted quickly. Borrowing three hundred rubles he set about to transform the appearance of the young groom. With a haircut, a new suit and an elegant *shtreimel* [round hat of fur and velvet worn by Chasidim on Shabbat and special occeasions], Meir seemed a different person. He impressed everyone with his fine appearance and intelligent mien.

When Mr. Velbka arrived, money in hand, to complete the divorce, the Rebbe took him aside and whispered: "I have found the perfect match for your daughter." They walked into the *Beit Midrash* (study hall), where the Rebbe pointed to the renovated Meir, who was sitting in front of a large tome of Talmud, studying it with another chasid.

Velbka was duly impressed with the young man's sophisticated appearance. Not recognizing him at all, he agreed that this could very well be a suitable match. The Rebbe then revealed the truth; this was, in fact, the man his daughter's had already married.

Reb Tzvi's face fell, but he said nothing. The Rebbe spoke further: "I have heard from heaven that this match has been decreed. You, however, were supposed to have lost your entire fortune, and so been forced to take this match. When I prayed on your behalf I succeeded in averting that part of the verdict."

"I am willing to do whatever you say, Rebbe," said the awed innkeeper.

"Very well," asserted Rabbi Moshe-Zvi. "I vouch that this man comes from a family of excellent lineage, and is himself an accomplished Torah scholar and a refined person of outstanding character. The only negative is his poverty.

"Now, thank G-d, he has a thousand silver rubles. A proper good diet will further improve his appearance. You could do no better than to continue with him. I assure you: it is a match made in heaven. May you both journey home with joyful hearts."

The innkeeper took the Rebbe's counsel to heart, and happily brought his son-in-law home with him. The newly wedded couple lived many happy and prosperous years together, and were frequent visitors to the court of the Rebbe of Sevran.

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***Source:*** Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles mostly from A Treasury of Chassidic Tales (Artscroll), but with variant and added details from other written and oral sources. (Zevin -see #263 in this email series--records it in the name of a different Rebbe, without names of the two Chasidim, and with it taking only one visit to the Rebbe by the innkeeper.)

***Biographical note:* Rabbi Moshe-Zvi Giterman of Sevran** [of blessed memory: 5535 - 27 Tevet 5597 (1775 - Dec. 1837 C.E.)] was a disciple of his father, whom he succeeded as Maggid of Savran in 1802, and of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of and Rabbi Boruch of Mezhibuz. He later became the Rabbi of Berditchev after the passing of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak in 1810, and subsequently of the towns of Uman and Kishinev as well. He had thousands of chasidim. His Torah insights were collected and printed in the book, *Likutey Shoshanim*.

**Connection:** Weekly Reading - Finding a match.

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**The Legacy of Rav**

**Shmuel Wosner**

Many years ago, there was a prominent community leader who announced that he was going to send his oldest son to a public school instead of to yeshivah, and get him to start joining with the Haskalah movement of ‘enlightenment’ and reform. These people were wicked and went against Hashem and the Torah.

Rav Teitelbaum, who headed one of the local yeshivas, was very against this, but even though he tried, there was nothing he could do to change the man’s mind. A short while later, it was announced that the Chofetz Chaim was going to be traveling through this town. Since Rav Teitelbaum was very close with the Chofetz Chaim, the prominent man asked Rav Teitelbaum if he can set up an appointment for him with the Chofetz Chaim so that he can get a brachah from the Gadol Ha’dor.

Rav Teitlebaum set up the appointment, but did not tell the Chofetz Chaim about this man’s decision for his son. When this man went in to see the holy Chofetz Chaim, he asked for a brachah. The Chofetz Chaim looked at the man and said, “Who am I to give you a brachah? If your son goes to yeshivah, he will have all of the brachos of the Torah. And who am I to stop the curses of the Torah if your son does not go to yeshivah?”

The man was astounded and terrified at hearing the strong words of the Chofetz Chaim. He decided then and there that he would follow the words of the Chofetz Chaim, and he sent his son to yeshivah. This son grew up and become Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner, author of Shevet HaLevi, the Av Bais Din of Zichron Meir of Bnei Brak, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin and a Poseik Ha’dor!

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