

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS KEDOSHIM 5779

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The Debriciner Rov And the Unhappy Couple

Rabbi Mordechai Twerski related that he once met up with family members of the Debriciner Rov, O"BM, and they shared with him the following incident.

They went to the grave site of their holy relative, the Debriciner Rov and saw a youngish couple praying. Not recognizing them as family members they were curious as to why this couple was there.

They asked them what it was that brought them to this place. The couple told the following story: "Twenty-two years ago we were young kids who got married to each other. After a short while it became clear to us that we didn't know what we were doing together. Every day was a different disagreement and another fight. We were not getting along at all.

"After trying and trying we were thinking about divorce. My wife was expecting, so we stayed together in the meantime. Having a child did not make married life easier – it complicated matters. We decided it was time to get divorced. We didn't know exactly how to go about getting a Jewish divorce, so we went to the Debriciner Rov.

"After hearing about our struggles in marriage he agreed to help us with the divorce. He instructed us to come back the next day and to bring our son. We thought this was part of the process. When we came back the next day with our son, he asked to see the child. He motioned that we hand him over. We did.

"He sat with the child, a little baby, in front of us, and he spoke to the child, stroking him affectionately all the while. "From this day forth your life is going to be very difficult," he began.

"You will be bounced from house to house. You'll spend one Shabbos with your mother and another Shabbos with your father. Most of the kids in school

won't understand your situation. They might not be eager to play by your broken home. Growing up as a happy child will be a steep challenge for you.



Kevar (gravesite of Rabbi Moshe Stern, zt"l, the Debriciner Rov

“Getting married will be difficult as well. It is not your fault. This is the lot that has been handed you. I want you to know that you will need extraordinary strength and courage and tremendous help from heaven to attain a normal life.”

“After his little talk with the child he handed the baby back to us. We were both crying. We looked up at each other and decided then and there, for the sake of the child, to give it another try. That was twenty years ago we had that encounter with the Debriciner Rov. We eventually worked out our differences. We are now happily married, Baruch Hashem. Tonight, that child, our son is getting married and we wanted to come here today to express our deep feelings of gratitude to the Rav.”

Reprinted from the Pesach 5779 email of Torah Sweets Weekly, edited by Mendel Berlin.

The Tzemach Tzedek's Advice to a Devastated Chasid

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

The following is a story about the third Rebbe of Chabad - Rabbi Menachem Mendel, nicknamed the Tzemach Tzedek. (Who passed away two days before Passover in 1866).

Rabbi Shmuel Pinchas was, besides being a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek, one of the richest men in the city of Homel.

He was a genius when it came to finances and the small safe in his home was always filled with jewels, foreign currencies and promissory notes for the large amounts of money the local nobility had borrowed from him.

But in one swift and terrible stroke of fate he lost it all.

It was a cold and rainy night, perfect for curling up in bed under a warm blanket, and that is exactly what Rabbi Shmuel Pinchas did. But just as he was drifting off to sleep, he thought he heard the window in the room next to his slide open.

It could have been his imagination but when he heard some more strange muffled noises from the same place he got out of bed as quietly as possible, took the heavy stick he kept next to his bed, slowly opened the door and peeked into the hall. There was no one.

But when he went into the next room he almost passed out; the window was open, so was the safe. And it was empty!

There was nothing he could do. In those days there were no phones and no organized police. So he did the only thing he could; he opened a book of Psalms, wept, read aloud and waited for the break of dawn and ran to the house of the Rabbi of Homel, Rabbi Yitchak Issac, hoping he had a solution.

The Rabbi opened his door and there stood Shmel Pinchas soaked in rain, face wet with tears and shaken to the bone. After hearing the sad story the Rabbi concluded that his only chance was to get to the Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, in the town of Lubavitch as soon as possible.

The next morning Shmuel Pinchas, after an all-night carriage ride, was standing before the Rebbe pouring out his heart and weeping.

The Rebbe heard the story, looked Shmuel Pinchas deep in the eyes, as though to say 'forget the money', and said.

"What is worrying you is the money you lost. But you should know that everything that happens is for a reason. The burglary is only a result of something that you are lacking spiritually. Something much more important. Fix that, and G-d can save you in the blink of an eye!"

The words of the Rebbe totally devastated Shmuel Pinchas. Suddenly he felt as though the ground dropped out from under him and the money was meaningless. What is money worth if he himself is worthless?! Maybe it was his attitude toward the Torah, maybe toward G-d maybe toward his fellow man. Maybe all three! But his heart was broken inside him.

Something must have happened spiritually that moment because the Rebbe looked at him completely differently and said very calmly.

"Travel to the city of Babroisk and spend the Shabbat there in a small inn just before the entrance of the town owned by a Jew and his sons. Then for the next two days, find a place in the city itself and HaShem will help.

Without hesitation Shmuel Pinchas thanked the Rebbe profusely, ran outside to his wagon and drove as fast as the horses could to Babroisk. It was Thursday night and the only way he could make it before Shabbat was by traveling non-stop.

Just minutes before Shabbat he arrived at the hotel the Rebbe spoke of, got a room, washed up and changed his clothes, prayed the Shabbat prayers, ate a meal from the food he had brought along, learned his daily portions of Talmud he had set for himself and lay down to sleep.

His mind wanted to begin racing but he realized that it would do him no good to think about it rather he repeated words of Torah by heart until he drowsed off.

But it wasn't easy. A group of five or six drunken gentiles that were staying in the room next to his made raucous noise the entire night. And so it was the night after Shabbat. He even knocked on their door and asked them to be quiet several times but to no avail.

Then, early Monday morning as he was packing to leave, one of his neighbors knocked on his door apologized for the noise and then asked Reb Shmuel if he could speak to him.

He asked him if knew any of the rich people in Bobruisk. He explained that he and his friends are working together as investors but now they have an important investment to make and all they have is some promissory notes and jewelry while the other side is demanding cash.

When Shmuel Pinchas heard this he almost jumped out of his skin but he kept calm.

"Of course I know the rich people of Bobruisk. Tomorrow we will enter the city and I'll see what I can do. But what will my percentage be? What do I stand to earn if I help you?"

An agreement was made; Shmuel Pinchas would receive half the profits for every buyer he brought and the next day they were in the hotel owned by a friend of his in Bobruisk.

"But before I sell anything, I want to see what you have" he explained. And sure enough, when they opened the small suitcase there were all his promissory notes and jewels along with others that also must have been stolen!

He managed to keep a straight face and they suspected nothing. He looked through the bills, expressed his satisfaction and walked out, saying he was going to find takers. But in fact went to the owner of the hotel and told him the entire story. Together they made a plan; the owner called his sons— all large muscular fellows, told them what had happened and they burst in on the thieves catching them by complete surprise binding and blindfolding them till the police came.

Suddenly Shmuel Pinchas realized the enormity of what happened. If it hadn't have been for the Rebbe's interpretation and advice he would have lost not only his money but also a chance to fix his own attitude toward life.

The Rebbe, with just one sentence had opened his eyes and saved him materially and spiritually at once!

Reprinted from the Pesach 5779 email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.

Connect the Dots

By Rabbi David Ashear

A man, who we'll call Aharon, told me that three years ago he went through a very challenging time. He had a knee replacement surgery, he was diagnosed with cancer and he had a cardiac arrest, all within a short amount of time. Each one of those experiences alone could put a person into a depression, but this man is happier than ever. What is his secret?

The day he was diagnosed, he was devastated. After receiving the phone call from the doctor, he left work, went home and cried like a baby. Nobody was around, so he didn't tell anyone. He just sat there and cried. After some time, he decided to call his Rabbi for some chizuk.

His Rabbi told him, “Don’t worry, you’re going to get through this. Mr. So-and-so was also diagnosed with a similar type of cancer a few years ago, and he’s doing very well now.”

Aharon knew of that man, but hadn’t seen him in over fifty years. They had once worked together, during the summer, when they were fifteen years old and hadn’t seen each other since. Aharon felt a little bit of encouragement.

Right after that he went to pray Mincha. As he got out of the car, he bumped into that man- the one he hadn’t seen in fifty years. After they prayed, he went over to talk to him and got a lot of encouragement from him. Aharon thought to himself, how could it be? I haven’t seen him in so long and now, five minutes after the Rabbi mentions his name I see him? He felt that Hashem just spoke with him. He felt Hashem telling him that He’s with him in this trying time. And that gave him a whole new perspective.

When he told his wife and children about the diagnoses, he was much more upbeat. He said, “Don’t worry, Hashem is with us.” This experience enabled him to connect the dots to so many other times in his life when he experienced a clear hashgachat Hashem without realizing it. And since then, he lives his life with Hashem daily, talking to Him all the time, and he has experienced miracles.

His cardiac arrest took place on a Monday morning at 9:00 am. At that time of day, he’s usually alone somewhere. But on that day, he had a meeting scheduled and the other party demanded that it be at 9:00 sharp. The moment he walked into his building, he collapsed. Hatzalah was called and two of its members happened to be together, right down the block.

They also happened to be his friends. 911 was also called and they ended up coming with a piece of equipment, which Hatzalah did not have, that was vital into saving Aharon. His two friends immediately started working on him when they got to the scene. They tried for six long minutes to get a pulse, without success. When the 911 ambulance arrived, their paramedics took over. They worked on Aharon for another fifteen minutes, and they couldn’t get a pulse either. They then pronounced him deceased and covered him with a sheet.

Aharon’s two friends from Hatzalah were standing there, saying, “No, we can’t give up. What are we going to tell his family? We have to try harder.” So after already twenty one minutes without a pulse, they began working on him again. They did everything possible and finally, fifteen minutes later, they got a faint pulse, enough to be able to rush him to the hospital.

Sometime after that, a doctor came out and told the family, Aharon will probably not make it through the night and, even if he does, he wouldn’t be able to determine the extent of his brain damage for a few weeks. Normally, if a person is without a pulse for even eight minutes, it could cause irreparable brain damage.

Aharon was out for thirty six minutes. The doctor also said, “If somehow he does survive, he’ll need extensive rehabilitation for months.”

Baruch Hashem, Aharon was out of the hospital one week later with no brain damage and, by the next day, he was already back to driving his car.

It was a miraculous recovery, but it gets even better. A few days later, Aharon was nervously traveling to the city to start his chemotherapy treatments. He wished, somehow, he could avoid it, but he knew he had no choice. After some testing, the doctor told him, “We can’t do chemo on you now. Your heart is too weak. We’re going to have to try something else.”

They gave him a medication called Lupron and Baruch Hashem, Aharon has responded so well to it. Now, three years later, it has done wonders for him and he experienced no side effects at all. He realized, even his heart attack was a gift from Hashem. It was the catalyst for his successful and easy treatments.

Aharon now appreciates every breath of his life. He can’t wait to go to shul each day and pray to Hashem. He gets to shul early; he concentrates on every word; he values his private time with Hashem immensely. He concluded, “I hope other people will learn from my experience to appreciate their lives, to appreciate Hashem, to take notice of Hashem’s involvement in their lives and to utilize every day He gives them to its fullest.”

Reprinted from the April 29, 2019 email of Living Emunah.

The Devotion of the Kiddush Levanah Reciter

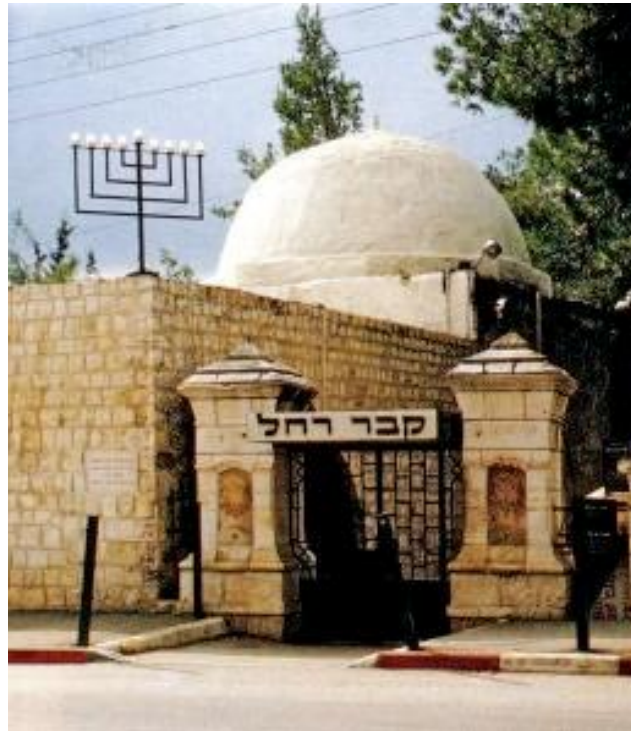
The following story by Rabbi Yechiel Spero shows how special the mitzvah of Kiddush Levanah is. Once, a couple in Yerushalayim, Rabbi and Mrs. Feldman, had much difficulty having children. They were married for nineteen years and doctors could not help them, but they would never give up trying, and they would never stop Davening.

Rabbi Feldman was very careful in performing Mitzvos, but in particular, he loved the Mitzvah of Kiddush Levanah, and tried to do that Mitzvah each month in the best possible way.

One year, in the month of Teives, it rained every day, and it was impossible to see the moon through the clouds, which made it impossible to say the Brachah on the new moon. Rabbi Feldman waited each night to try and say Kiddush

Levanah, but it just didn't stop raining. On the last possible night to fulfill the Mitzvah, it was still raining, and Rabbi Feldman began to give up hope.

A friend of his, Chaim Weinman, came to visit him, because he knew how precious the Mitzvah of Kiddush Levanah was to him, and he suggested that they contact the local army posts to see if their weather forecasts predicted a break in the rain and clouds. Without any other options, Rabbi Feldman called one of the posts.



Kever Rochel (the Tomb of Rachel in Bais Lechem)

After a quick conversation, he excitedly hung up the phone and told his friend that the officer told him that the forecast for Chevron was partly cloudy skies! Though it was only a small chance, it was still a possibility, and he drove with his friend toward Chevron to try and say Kiddush Levanah.

When they got to Bais Lechem, they looked out of their car at the sky and saw the moon shining brightly! They immediately got out and said Kiddush Levanah, and with great Simchah, they danced and sang 'Tovim Meoros Shebara Elokeinu!' and then they went to Kever Rochel to Daven by Rochel Imeinu.

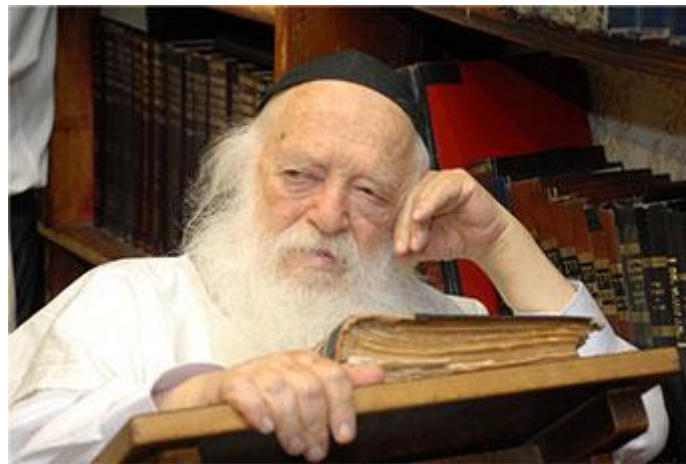
A group of Chassidim were in Bais Lechem at the time, and they were very impressed with the way Rabbi Feldman said Kiddush Levanah, and by his happiness and enthusiasm at performing the Mitzvah. They approached him and asked that he tell them about himself.

When they heard the difficult situation he was going through, that he did not yet have children, the entire group of Chassidim started Davening for him. They said, “Ribbono Shel Olam! Look at the sacrifice this Jew has shown for the Mitzvah of Kiddush Levanah! Look how precious this Mitzvah is to him! Mamma Rochel! Please cry for this couple who has suffered so much, that they should be blessed with a child!”

Miraculously, a little over nine months later, on the eleventh of Cheshvan, which is the Yartzeit of Rochel Imeinu, Rabbi and Mrs. Feldman were blessed with twin girls!

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5779 email of Torah U'Tefilah compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky And the Haircut



A man once went to buy an apartment in Bnei Brak, but before he signed the contract, he went to visit Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlit”a, to receive his Brachah before making the purchase. When he told Rav Chaim what he was about to do, Rav Chaim said to him, “Brachah V’Hatzlachah, but first go and get a haircut.”

The man was surprised, especially since he had gotten a haircut the week before, but he decided to listen to the Gadol Ha’dor without question. He went to the barber, who was surprised to see him a week after giving him a haircut, and he asked him what he was doing back so soon.

The man told the barber that he was about to sign a contract to buy an apartment, and when he went to Rav Chaim for a Brachah, he told him to get a haircut, so here he was!

The barber asked a lot of questions about the apartment and its details, and finally he said, “I know this apartment, and I would advise you to run away from it like it is fire! I live in the building across the street from it, and there are serious problems among the neighbors. Anyone who buys in this building is always in a hurry to sell it again.” The man was amazed that Rav Chaim was able to guide him and prevent him from making a terrible mistake, even though he had not told Rav Chaim any of the details involved with this apartment!

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5779 email of Torah U'Tefilah compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

Rav Avigdor Miller and The Right Pair of Glasses



q“How great are Your deeds Hashem, all of them You have made with wisdom, the earth is full of Your creations!” which is a Pasuk from Tehilim (104:24).

Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l, beautifully points out that if archeologists would travel to a deserted island and find a hut surrounded by miles of nature, they would undoubtedly determine that a human had lived on the island and built the hut.

If the island would be filled with advanced structures including plumbing and campfire sights, how much more convinced would the researchers become!

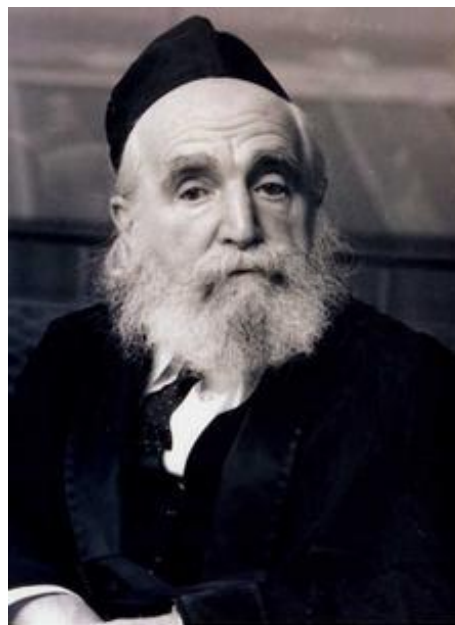
Dovid Ha'melech, when he wrote this Pasuk, expresses that the earth, sea, space, the galaxies, and so on, all testify to the existence of Hashem our Creator and the complexity of His creations.

The world is packed with examples of this with every step we take. From biology to the world of nature, from chemical research to the beauty of a sunset, Hashem has made each of them with tremendous wisdom.

Rav Miller says, "We just need to wear the right pair of glasses to notice them!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5779 email of Torah U'Tefilah compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

The Lady Who Called Rav Moshe for Candle Lighting Time



An elderly lady once called Rav Moshe Feinstein's house on a Friday afternoon and asked if she could speak with Rav Moshe. Rav Moshe's attendant answered the phone and told the woman that Rabbi Feinstein was very busy at the

moment and couldn't come to the phone, but he said that perhaps he could help her.

The lady said, "I would like to know what time candle lighting is this evening." The attendant replied, "It's at 6:37, but you don't have to call Rav Moshe with that sort of question. The time is printed on many Jewish calendars."

The woman then said, "Well, I don't know about any calendars. I've been calling to ask the Rabbi the time for candle lighting every Erev Shabbos for the past twenty-five years, and he never said a word to me about calendars!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5779 email of Torah U'Tefilah compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

Davening

To Be With the Rebbe

By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon



The Tzemach Tzedek, zt"l, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, third Rebbe of the Chabad Lubavitch movement, (1789-1866)

One day, Reb Hillel [Paritcher] announced his desire to travel to the [Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek for Shabbos. Every one of the wagon drivers regretfully informed him that they would never be able to make it in time, as the distance from Babroisk to Lubavitch was just too great to arrive before Shabbos.

One young chossid, who owned a pair of strong, young horses, heard about Reb Hillel's predicament. Approaching Reb Hillel, he confidently offered to help.

“I can get you to Lubavitch before Shabbos. However, you must agree to two things. First, I am going to have to travel on the paved road that the Czar made.¹

“Secondly, we are going to have to cover great distances and travel many hours every day. I am sorry to say but the Rov won’t be able to daven at length as he is accustomed.² If the Rov promises he will daven like most people do and allows me to go on the paved road, my horses will be able to do the job.”

Although both of these conditions were extremely painful for Reb Hillel to agree on, he accepted. His intense desire to spend Shabbos with the Rebbe could not be appeased.

Putting together their belongings and supplies for the trip, they set out immediately. Only after he covered the necessary distance for that day’s traveling did the young chossid pull into an inn late in the evening. Before retiring for the night, he reminded Reb Hillel of his promise not to daven at length the following morning.

The next morning, they both awoke extremely early to daven. After davening, the young chossid ate his breakfast and quickly went to hitch the horses to the wagon. When everything was ready to go, and he entered the inn to get Reb Hillel, he was shocked. Reb Hillel was completely unprepared to travel and was only at the beginning of Shacharis. Reb Hillel was davening at his usual slow pace, when even a regular weekday davening took considerable time. “I should have known,” the young man muttered to himself.

After waiting patiently for hours, the young man concluded that they would not be able to be in Lubavitch for Shabbos. When Reb Hillel finally concluded his davening, the chossid asked, “Didn’t the Rov agree to daven as a regular person does? Why didn’t he daven at the regular pace of most people, and not at length as we agreed? Now,” he sadly concluded, “we won’t be able to arrive in Lubavitch before Shabbos.”

Reb Hillel replied with a relaxed smile, “When a merchant travels to the great fairs in Leipzig and elsewhere, it is in order to buy the merchandise he wants at special prices. Only there, at the fair, is it discounted. He then brings it to his hometown to sell at a profit.” The young man shook his head in agreement.

“Now, tell me,” continued Reb Hillel, “what happens if while he is traveling to Leipzig, he meets a dealer who has the exact merchandise he is looking for, and the dealer tells him, ‘I will sell it to you at the same price you would get at the fair’? What would you call the merchant if he says, ‘I’m sorry. I cannot buy it from you here. I must buy it in faraway Leipzig. If you want, come with me to the fair and there I will buy it from you.’

¹ As a rule, Reb Hillel refrained from using that road so as not to give any praise to the evil Czar who enacted many harsh decrees against the Jews.

² Reb Hillel used to finish *Shacharis* and his *shiurim* around midday.

“Obviously you would consider him a complete fool. After all, this is the merchandise he wants to buy and the dealer is willing to sell it at the price charged at the fair. So, why must he travel all the way to the fair? The traveling is for nothing.

“The same thing is true here,” concluded Reb Hillel. “Why are we traveling to Lubavitch? Only in order for the Rebbe to give us guidance and advice, and help us learn how to daven properly. And now that I am on the road in the middle of the journey and the davening is going well, only a fool would say ‘No! I can’t daven here. I must go to Lubavitch to daven.’”

Reprinted from the Chol Hamoed Pesach 5779 email of the Weekly Story email of Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon. Excerpted from his book Shmuos U’Sippurim, vol. II, pp. 56-7.

The Bar Mitzvah Photographer

Lashon hara has been known to destroy lives, and there are many stories that portray this concept. The way to avoid lashon hara is to look upon everyone with ayin tova and give others the benefit of the doubt, because you never know what’s behind another person’s actions.

One such story that I saw in the book “The Other Side of the Story” by Yehudit Samet concerns a photographer who never showed up for a bar mitzva that he was hired to photograph. At the last minute the parents desperately called another photographer, “David.”

At first David declined, because he was already working at another job. But when he heard that the parents were desperate because the original photographer didn’t show up at the last minute, he decided to leave his assistant to finish up his morning job as he was almost done, and leave to help out at the bar mitzva party for the desperate family.

Obviously, David walked in late to the bar mitzvah. When the guests saw this, not knowing the reason he’d come so late, many began to talk negatively about David. “How can he come so late to the bar mitzva...that’s very irresponsible of him...I would never use him for any of my parties!”

Of course the real truth was that he was doing the family a big favor! But the episode had a very negative effect on David’s livelihood, until the truth finally surfaced. We have to learn from this story to watch what we say and try to give people the benefit of the doubt!

Reprinted from the Parashat Tazria/Shabbat Hachodesh email of Rabbi Amram Sananes as written by Jack Rahmey.