**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Vayishlach 5774**

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**The Subway Rider Who Let a Stranger Nap on His Shoulder and Unwittingly Became an Internet Sensation**

By Tova Ross



**The picture of Isaac Theill that went viral.(*[Reddit](http://r2.reddit.com/r/nyc/comments/1pmjf5/stranger_falls_asleep_on_guys_shoulder_on_the/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*)**

 In a long life of quiet good deeds that generally go unnoticed except by the individuals on the receiving end, Isaac Theil, 65, had no hidden agenda last Thursday when he felt his neighbor on the Brooklyn-bound Q train nod off on his shoulder, and then let him sleep soundly there for the better part of the next hour.

 A fellow passenger, taken by this scene, was further struck when Theil politely declined his offer to rouse the dozing straphanger. “He must have had a long day, let him sleep. We’ve all been there, right?” said Theil. The astounded passenger took a furtive photograph, [posted it](http://r2.reddit.com/r/nyc/comments/1pmjf5/stranger_falls_asleep_on_guys_shoulder_on_the/) with an accompanying caption on Reddit, and the rest, as they say, is social media history: the photo quickly made its way through the blogosphere and garnered over one million “likes” and nearly 200,000 shares on Facebook.

**Bewildered by His Sudden**

**Catapult into Viral Internet Fame**

 “The whole thing was happenstance, and I simply remembered the times my own head would bop on someone’s shoulder because I was so tired after a long day,” Theil recounted, sounding bewildered by his sudden catapult into viral Internet fame. The still-unidentified young man remained fast asleep as the train pulled into Newkirk Avenue, Theil’s usual point of departure, and Theil gently eased him off his shoulder before exiting. “When I got off the subway, I didn’t give it a second thought.”

 It was Theil’s sister in Montreal, Pam Russ, who called him early the next morning to let him know he appeared in an online photo; her eagle-eyed son had spotted his uncle and quickly alerted family members. Before long, the phone calls poured in from family and friends who were seeing it everywhere. When Theil arrived at shul for Shabbat the next day, the rabbi gave him a huge smile and two thumbs up before making his way over to praise his Kiddush Hashem.

**Just a Typical Deed of Chesed for Theil**

 “Who lets a random stranger sleep on his shoulder in germ-filled New York City?” asked Theil’s 32-year-old daughter Helah. “But this is just typical of Dad.”

 Other family members, friends, and neighbors corroborated Helah’s observation of her father’s penchant for doing good deeds in his typically unassuming manner; many shared their experiences with these acts of kindness online. Yehuda Jason Schupper, a neighbor of Theil’s younger daughter Shira, 27, shared the time his wife was waiting outside for an ambulance to take their daughter to the emergency room after an accidental injury. “Mr. Thiel observed my frantic wife and though he knew her only in passing, immediately offered to drive her to the hospital and then did so,” he wrote.

 “Isaac’s lovely act of graciousness towards a stranger on the train is emblematic of the life that he leads and behavior that he strives for,” said Orlee Zorbaron, a close relative. “He is a kind and generous person who takes to heart the Jewish tenet of ‘do unto others,’” she added.

 Pnina Rudy, a longtime family friend, said that in the 20-plus years she’s known him, “Mr. Theil has always taken a genuine interest in people and asks how they’re doing because he really wants to know, and not because he’s fulfilling some pat obligation to make small talk.”

**Even His Ex-Son-in-Law**

**Spoke Kindly of Theil**

 Even Helah’s ex-husband, Yehuda Feldman, speaks kindly of him; maintaining warm relationships to ex in-laws might be the most irrefutable evidence to Theil’s all-around likeability factor.

 “Despite the fact that I am no longer married to his daughter, Isaac made sure to let me know that he would always be there for me if I ever needed anything,” Feldman said. “Needless to say, this attitude is not very common in cases of divorce.”

 Elad Nehorai, a popular blogger who runs [Pop Chassid](http://popchassid.com/), was the one who pulled the photo from Reddit and first [posted](https://www.facebook.com/wearecharidy) it on Facebook. As the director of marketing for Charidy, a startup dedicated to reinventing the way people support charities, Nehorai is always on the lookout for things to post on social media that foster communal goodwill.

**A Small Moment**

**Captured on the Internet**

 “I thought the photo was a perfect fit as soon as I saw it, though I had no way of knowing if it would take off,” he explained. “Clearly, people have responded, and I think it’s small moments like this one, which are easily captured and spread across the Internet, that help to restore people’s faith in humanity amid the terrible news stories that we’re bombarded with on a frequent basis.”

 Of course, the Internet also invites remarks from those who are more small-minded, and several commentators have offered up their worst racial assumptions about the image. Others have taken offense to the photo caption’s references to the religion and race of the two men, as though that was what made the story so compelling.

 “Maybe the photo wouldn’t have become so popular if people weren’t seeing a Jewish man with a yarmulke and a black man in a hood, and because they might not necessarily correlate the two,” theorized Theil. “But there is only one reason that I didn’t move, and let him continue sleeping, and that has nothing to do with race. He was simply a human being who was exhausted, and I knew it and happened to be there and have a big shoulder to offer him.”

 Theil jokes that his 15 minutes of viral fame are almost up, but he gets serious when he says that what he hopes people remember is not him so much as the opportunity to help the next person out, whether it’s on the subway or elsewhere. “I would love for people to use this as a lesson to just be good to each other.”

Reprinted from the November 6, 2013 email of Tablet Magazine. Tova Ross is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and the Huffington Post. She is a contributing blogger at Kveller.com.

**Love of the Land**

**Rabbi Elazar ben**

**Azarya – The Tana**

*“If there is no learning of Torah there can be no proper dealing with people. If there is no proper dealing with people there can be no learning of Torah” — Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah (Avot 3:17)*

 If one fails to learn Torah his dealings with people will not be proper, for he will not be aware of his responsibilities. It has been pointed out by *Chazal* (*Bava Kama 30a*) that one who wishes to be a truly righteous person must study the Tractates of *Seder* *Nezikin*, which deal with man’s responsibility to his fellow man.

 If, on the other hand, one does not deal properly with people, his Torah will be forgotten as a penalty for causing the *Chillul Hashem*, described by *Chazal* (*Yoma 86*), of people saying, “How corrupt are the actions of this person who learns Torah.” -- *Tosefot Yom Tov*.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Journal of the Internet.*

**New United States of America Hanukkah stamp**



**New U.S. postage stamp to honor Jewish holiday of Hanukkah will be issued on November 19, 2013 at the Forever rate (good for mailing years from now regardless of any increase in the rates of the U.S. Postal Service.**

**Hanukkah**

 The 2013 stamp depicts a hanukiah, the nine-branched menorah used during Hanukkah. Eight of its branches represent each of the eight nights and days of Hanukkah, and the ninth, the shamash or “the servant,” is used to light the other candles. The stamp art is a photograph of a contemporary forged-iron hanukiah created by Vermont blacksmith Steven Bronstein.

 Hanukkah is the Hebrew word for “dedication.” Tradition relates how a miracle took place during the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, which had been desecrated. The sacramental oil, thought to be enough for only one day, burned for eight days. The miracle of the oil is at the heart of the ritual of the lighting of the hanukiah.

 In 2013, Hanukkah begins at sundown on November 27.

*Reprinted from a press releases issued by the United States Postal Service.*

**Boruch’s Twenty Kopeks**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

 Boruch was in trouble. His daughter was twenty five, getting older every day and he had no dowry to offer a prospective groom. In fact he, as all the Jews in the area, barely had enough to live on.

 And it was all because of the cruel Poritz (Landowner) who not only charged ridiculously high rent but also regularly imposed strange fines and taxes on the Jews to cover his lavish life style and gambling debts.

 To top it all off, one day a matchmaker came up with a good suggestion for his daughter!!

 Oy! A good suggestion!! But all poor Boruch had to offer were debts! And the 'suggestion' himself was in the same economic bracket.

**No Alternative but to Seek**

**Help from a Great Tzadik**

 With no alternative Boruch set out by foot to see the great Tzadik (Holy Jew) Rebbe Elimelich of Lezinsk [One of the foremost pupils of the Magid of Meseritz, the successor of the Baal Shem Tov] for help.

 Boruch was very timid by nature; maybe too timid, and he hated to bother the Rebbe but now he was desperate and the Rebbe, who like Moses had the power to miraculously free Jews from 'Egypt', was his only chance.

 Two days later he was standing before the holy Tzadik humbly pouring out his heart. Just to stand before such a holy genus was a humbling experience how much more so to beg like a pauper.

 The Rebbe heard the story and smiled assuringly, told him that there was nothing to worry about, took three ten-kopek coins from his desk drawer and put them on the table before Boruch as if to say…. 'Here's what you've been waiting for'!

**Almost Began to**

**Cry from Confusion**

 Boruch looked at the coins and almost began to cry from confusion. Something crazy was going on here. Thirty Kopeks was close to nothing. There was no possibility that Rebbe misunderstand what he said. But thirty kopeks?! A wedding with one musician costs at least a thousand Kopeks. What could he possibly do with thirty Kopeks?!

 But, reminding himself that the Rebbe certainly knew what he was doing and hoping that the Rebbe didn't notice his dismay, he took the coins as though they were worth millions, forced a smile, said thank you, and tried his best to look grateful as he backed out of the room.

 Trodding slowly on the road back home he couldn't help, as always, thinking negative thoughts. What would he tell his wife and daughter? What would he say to his friends? To the groom? The groom's family? The matchmaker? This was the end!! No one can make a wedding with thirty kopeks? Just as he left the city boundary he heard someone yelling in the distance from behind him.

**Ordered to Stop!**

 "Hey, Hey there!! Hey, Stop!!"

 He turned to see one of the Rebbe's Chassidim running after him waving his arms. "Stop!! Hey!! Stop!!"

 'Aha!' he thought to himself. "The Rebbe had been testing me! He wanted to see how I reacted. What a fool I was for doubting!!! For sure here is the rest of the money!!!" The Chassid arrived and was still huffing and puffing as he spoke.

 "The Rebbe sent me…… to say that he gave you …... He wants you to…….. to give back one of the coins. That's what he told me to tell you…….. I should take back one of the coins. He gave you too much."

 Boruch was too numb to react. He mechanically took one of the three coins from his pocket, handed it over, the Chassid put it in his own pocket and then with a brisk 'Thank you, have a good journey' ran back to the city leaving the perplexed Boruch alone to resume his trip... ten Kopeks poorer.

**Ten Kopeks Poorer**

**And Really Confused**

 Now he was really confused. But the idea popped into his mind…. There is a Chassidic saying "Think good and it will be good." For sure these bad thoughts weren't helping… and slowly they were driving him insane!

 An hour later, trying to keep positive, he saw up the road a group of three young ruffians huddled over a bonfire off to a side. "Oy!" he though to himself… "This means trouble!"

 But instead of cowering as usual he put his hand in his pocket, felt the coins, remembered his resolution, pictured his Rebbe's face and stood straight, smiling.

 The gentiles looked up and approached, one of them holding up a leather bag. "Hello there Jew! Want to buy a good purse?"

 He shook their hands, took the bag and had a look. It was truly a fine piece of work, well sewn with golden inlays. He opened it to have a look at the lining and there was….. money!!! Perhaps twenty notes of large denominations in German currency!! It was a small fortune! The boys probably had no idea what they were but he recognized them.

 "Sure, you can have the pictures too." They said. "Just give us thirty Kopeks and its all yours."

 Boruch almost passed out! Thirty Kopeks?? Why that is what he HAD! "But Gevald! All I have is twenty!!" He thought to himself and began to get depressed and confused like always. But he the coins reminded him to be positive. He remained calm, closed his eyes and prayed for an idea…. And suddenly he had it!"

**Offers an Alternative Deal**

 "Listen fellows. You know what?" he heard himself say confidently, "I don't have enough for the bag. But I'll give you twenty Kopeks for the pictures."

 The boys looked at each other trying to hide their glee, what a fool! Twenty kopeks for paper!! Now they could sell the purse twice!! They took the coins, shook his hand again and gladly let him take the pieces of paper pictures while they held on to the purse and watched him turn and continue his long trek home.

 As soon as Boruch was far enough away from them he took out the bills and counted. Twenty bills, each worth the equivalent of five thousand kopeks. It was a fortune!! He was rich!! He and his entire community were saved! It was a miracle!!

 But when he arrived home his wife, although overjoyed, reminded him that he couldn't take the money until he was sure it was ownerless.

**Felt Someone Staring at Him**

 So a few days later he returned to Lezinsk, first to find out if anyone there knew to whom the purse belonged and if not to give a big donation and invite the Rebbe to his daughter's wedding. But before he reached the Rebbe's house he felt someone staring at him. He turned to look and it was one of those gentile boys that had sold him the 'pictures', but now he was bandaged and beaten. Reb Boruch nodded and the boy began to talk.

 "Hello there Jew. You're the one we met with the purse right? Well you'll never guess what happened. As soon as you left we got into an argument about how to divide the coins and the purse, you know, who gets what. Well, somehow the purse fell into the fire and well, that was the end of it. We just left it there to burn. Who would buy a singed purse?

 Then, about five minutes later this huge wagon comes storming up from the direction of the city, stops where we are, and who gets out but that devil the Poritz. He was screaming ….. about his purse.

 "Well, by that time it was just ashes, only a few strips of metal left and when he saw it there in the fire he started cursing, jumping around and screaming at us like a mad man… for a stupid purse!! He began beating us with his can and ordered his servants to do the same. What a maniac! For a purse!! And he's supposed to be a rich man!

**Realizing the Miracle of**

**Just Having 20 Kopeks**

 "Then he jumped into his carriage and drove back to where he came from. Lucky you didn't buy the purse and he didn't continue straight. If he would have seen you he probably would have killed you…. He hates you Jews. He almost killed us!"

 Suddenly Boruch understood. If he would have had all thirty kopeks to buy that purse, the Poritz would have continued down the road, found the purse by him and maybe even killed him. For sure he wouldn't be rich!

 The twenty Kopeks the Rebbe gave Boruch was just enough money to make him rich … and change his attitude about seeming bad luck.

*Reprinted from this week’s email from Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**The Source and**

**The Broken Wells**

 There is a well-known story of a priest who devised a plan to bring about the downfall of the Jews. He hired an instructor to teach him Gemara (incidentally, that teacher violated the prohibition of teaching Torah to gentiles) and joined a yeshivah, disguised as a regular yeshivah student.

 In this way, he would familiarize himself with the language and culture of the Jews so that he could lead the students - and perhaps the rabbis, as well - away from their faith and persuade them of the authenticity of the gentiles’ theology.

 He sat and learned diligently like the other students. When the Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Yehonatan Eibshiss zs”l, entered the Bet Midrash, he glanced around at the students. He made his way over to this particular student and began conversing with him. With his overpowering intellect, he was capable to detect the scheme within an instant. He managed to confuse the student regarding his studies, and, over the course of conversation, it became clear why he had joined the yeshivah. He was immediately ejected.

 The students all wondered, how did the Rosh Yeshivah identify him immediately? How did he know to go straight to this student and talk with him? He told them, “I noticed that he stood out. You all learned while swaying enthusiastically, whereas he studied in a cold, stiff manner. I could tell that he was not Jewish.”

**A Soul of a Jew is**

**Hewn from Heaven**

 He proceeded to cite the comment of the Zohar that the soul of the Jew is hewn from the Heavens, and it therefore strives for spirituality. That is why Jews sway while praying and studying Torah, just as a candle continually flickers, never able to rest.

 Indeed, the Jewish soul yearns for spiritual fulfillment, for meaning in life, for religious satisfaction. Fortunate are those who receive a Torah education, which opens the doors to such a magnificent universe, a world so rich and so genuine, the world of Judaism and all its treasures. There are many from whom these treasures were stolen, before whom the road to the precious heritage was blocked. Their souls know no rest, and they constantly search for these roads.

**Seeking Spirituality in**

**All the Wrong Places**

 They often pack their bags and fly to India, the mountains of Tibet and the sanctuaries of Naples. They journey throughout the various nations, they cross narrow bridges extending over steep cliffs, they go through forests and jungles, they meet deprived monks whose gray hair is thick as mud and whose fingernails are long and crooked.

 The conversations are conducted in dark, mysterious alleys in broken English. “Where are you from?” they are asked. “From Israel,” comes the reply. “You are Jewish?” continues the monk. “Yes,” they respond. “Then why are you here? You are the very source! Go to your institutions there, as there you will find everything. Here we have just a copy, inaccurate and unclear. This is all gray - what you have is the shining light!”

 More than one or two such tourists have come back, straight to the yeshivot on their way towards teshuvah! From father to son and from teacher to student the message has been transmitted - all we need is the ultimate truth, which is located right here, within the Jewish people.

 In effect, this is a pasuk in our parashah: “For the children of Avraham’s concubines he gave gifts, and he sent them away from his son Yitzhak during his lifetime, eastward, to the land of Kedem” (25:6). Rashi explains, “He transmitted to them the name of impurity.” This concept is further developed in the Zohar (1, 133:), which explains that Avraham taught them the lowest levels of the spiritual world, while Yitzhak alone leaped to the heights of the profound wisdom, where everything is united under the guidance and providence of the Almighty.

**The Origins of Today’s**

**False Eastern Religions**

 They, the bearers of the lower levels of wisdom, went eastward, and from there spread all the eastern religions and ideologies, with all their inaccuracies and inconsistencies, and these beliefs were disseminated over the course of time.

 But here, within the wisdom of our Torah, everything remained pure and authentic, true to its source and unadulterated. For what reason should we resort to broken wells, wells which can’t contain any water, rather than searching within our live spring, the source of all wisdom, the exalted and eternal wisdom of the Torah. “Explore it, explore it - because everything is in it.” This wisdom attaches the person with his Creator and adorns him with the divine light and purity: “Fortunate is the one who listens to me, to knock at my doors each day, for he who finds me finds life, and he will be bestowed by the Divine Will.”

*Reprinted from the Parshat Chaya Sarah 5774 edition of the Aram Sobah Newsletter.*

**Letting My Daughter Go**

**By Evelyn Krieger**

***When my daughter got married at 20, I worried she was too young. But I was the one who wasn’t ready.***



**The author (left) at her daughter’s wedding, walking with the veiled bride.(No Eye Has Seen Photography)**

 Last June, my daughter’s wedding announcement graced the pages of the New York Times. Emily, 20, and Michael, 21, were the youngest couple announced that week, and most likely for the entire year. Confession: I wasn’t thrilled.

 This was not the milestone I had envisioned for my first-born during her sophomore year of college. But what do you do when you believe your child is making the wrong life decision? And if parenting is all about “letting go,” what happens when a mother is asked to do this earlier and faster than anticipated?

 It’s taken a year, a challenging year, but I’ve finally come to accept the decisions Emily made. Our Jewish journeys have taken us on divergent paths, and I had to let go before I was ready. But now, as we celebrate Emily and Michael’s first anniversary, I think of this past year as just another step in my evolving relationship with my daughter and the beginning of a new stage of what being a mother means to me.

**Asking Mom for Permission to Start Dating**

 “I think I’m going to start dating, Mom,” Emily told me on the phone from college, when she was 19. “Is that OK with you?”

 “Of course!” I said. “Just don’t rush into anything, if you know what I mean.”

 What I meant was marriage.

 Up until that point, Emily had never been on a date, kissed a boy, or even held hands. This choice reflected her beliefs as an Orthodox girl: Dating happens only when you are marriage-minded. I could see the advantages of this outlook on dating, but I had begun to wonder about its practicality. When it came to college students, I wondered if it was even healthy; I worried that it might unnecessarily push a young couple into early marriage, before they were truly ready. Many of Emily’s friends had started dating, and a few of them were already engaged. I feared that it might be contagious.

 “You’re in a different place than a lot of your friends,” I reminded her. “So, don’t follow someone else’s timetable.”

 “Have I ever, Mom?”

 Right.

**Emily Had Her Own Life Plan**

 Emily entered the world with her own life plan. At age 4, she asked me to show her on the calendar when she would be a grown-up. When she was 7, she asked if she could skip being a teenager. At age 10, she drew pictures of her future life, which included writing a best-selling book and having 10 kids. She took the SAT at 12, and at 13 (using her Hebrew name, Leah), launched a national [magazine](http://www.yaldah.com) for Jewish girls. She has been on the go ever since.

 In Emily’s religious circle, dating meant letting the right people know that she was looking and being specific about what she was looking for. Emily wanted to date men who shared her life views, were ready to commit, and weren’t intimidated by an accomplished and ambitious woman with a mind for business (including the magazine she continued to run). Why, she would ask, waste his time or mine?

 I thought back to my own dating experience. When I was 16, my parents allowed me to date only Orthodox boys, and in our tiny Midwestern community that gave me a choice of about five candidates. By the time I entered college in New York City, I was a disgruntled yeshiva graduate—sheltered, immature, and somewhat reckless. I dated indiscriminately, going out with any guy who could make me laugh, which led mainly to heartache and poor decisions (although I did have quite a few adventures). I could see how Emily’s choice to postpone dating thus far had eliminated distraction and romantic drama, allowing for a singular focus on developing her talents and female friendships.

**Our goal was to Raise Kids**

**Who Loved Being Jewish**

 In our family, the ultimate goal was to raise kids who loved being Jewish. My kids went to both public and day schools. They had friends and family members, Jewish and not, from all levels of observance. From an early age, Emily gravitated toward everything Jewish. She loved all the holidays. She loved reading Jewish books and visiting big Jewish communities.

 Over the years, our family grew in observance. Because our first community was so small, we relied on the services of the local Chabad Center. A few years at Camp Gan Israel proved inspirational for Emily, and she was gradually drawn toward the Chabad lifestyle, a path of Judaism that I, as a Modern Orthodox Jew, was on friendly terms with but did not embrace wholeheartedly.

 “You wouldn’t believe how much background checking goes on before the first date,” I explained to a non-Orthodox friend of mine as we talked about Emily’s dating. “It’s like getting security clearance!”

 “I guess that’s practical,” my friend replied. “But not very romantic.”

 “That comes later,” I said.

**“Later” Came in Just Two Months**

 “Later” came in just two months, when Emily called saying she had “met someone”—well, she hadn’t actually met him yet, rather, she had received first-hand accounts. Michael seemed to have everything on her checklist. As she filled me in on the details—recommendations, family background, schooling, career goals, religious outlook—I felt a twinge of excitement. I had to admit this pragmatic dating system offered an anxious parent a measure of comfort. I reminded Emily to take it slowly, to try to enjoy herself. No need to rush.

 “I know, Mom.”

 By the time Emily and Michael had their first date, they had skipped the preliminary, “where-are-you-from-what-do-you-do?” stage. They were ready to get down to business—and the question of chemistry. Emily called me after each date.

 “I like him,” she told me after their second date.

 “That’s a good start,” I replied.

 She shared all the amazing things they had in common, dropping tidbits she’d know I would value, like stellar academic achievement and a happy childhood.

**“You Talked for Five Hours?”**

 “You talked for five hours?” I asked after hearing about their date in Central Park.

 “Well, yeah, what else should we do? Oh, and Mom, I want you to meet him!”

 Michael passed the boyfriend test (although that is not what Emily wanted us to call him): He was articulate, polite, warm, and clearly crazy about our daughter. He sat at the kitchen table and graciously submitted to our lengthy interview, which my 17-year-old son would later call an interrogation. My 13-year-old said she’d be surprised if Michael ever came back. Were we really that bad? Not according to Emily’s report: “Michael loves you guys! He said he was so impressed by you both and could see why I turned out the way I did.”

 Really?

**His Parents Also Seemed**

**Too Good to be True**

 Michael’s parents also seemed too good to be true. How could you not like a man who self-published a book on how to treat your wife like a queen and whose business is conflict-resolution? Michael’s mother was an international speaker and philanthropist. She told me how she had embraced her son’s decision to lead a religious life—he, too, had gravitated toward Orthodoxy in high school through his involvement with Chabad. “I raised my kids to follow their passions,” she said earnestly. “He’s a wonderful, mature, loving boy.”

 I felt guilty for not sharing her enthusiasm and positive outlook toward the relationship. “It’s different with a son,” I told my husband. “And Michael is their youngest. They’ve had an empty nest for five years.”

 Not long after the boyfriend test, Emily came home for the weekend. She was glowing. “Well,” she said, “Michael and I want to get engaged!”

 Enter Steve Martin in Father of the Bride.

 “What’s the rush?” her father asked, his ears turning red. “You’ve got college to finish!”

 “I can do that and be married, too,” Emily assured us.

**The Word Lodged Behind My Ribcage**

 Married? The word lodged behind my ribcage. “Who said anything about marriage?” I asked desperately.

 “Mom, did you think I was dating just for fun?”

 And what would be so terrible about that? “How about to get some experience, to see who is out there—”

 “And I found him!” Emily said. “How was I supposed to know it would happen that fast? It could have taken another five years.”

 “You’re barely 20.”

 “Yes, Mom, I know.”

 We tried talking sense into her, at least what we thought made sense. You really haven’t known him long enough. How can you support yourselves? We can’t afford to make a wedding now. Don’t you want more time with your brother and sister? We got married at the sensible age of 26. You’re both too young! Every concern or objection her father and I raised, Emily countered with her practicality and natural optimism.

 “Mom, I know this wasn’t on your timetable,” Emily said calmly. “I can appreciate how hard it must be for you.”

 Oh, so it was my problem.

**How About Waiting a Year or**

**Two Before Getting Married?**

 “OK,” I said, catching my breath and trying another tactic. “So, how about getting engaged, but waiting a year before getting married?” Or two.

 “Mom, do you know how hard that would be?”

 I stared at her. And then I got it. Emily and Michael were following the halachic dictum of no touching until they stood under the wedding canopy. How could I have forgotten? And what could I say to that?

 “Besides,” she continued, “who wants to be in limbo? We want to start our life together. Sooner than later.”

 My mouth went dry. “How soon?”

 I wish I could say I was thrilled when Emily and Michael officially announced their engagement; everyone else seemed to be. Well-meaning friends offered comments like: “You’ll get to be a young grandmother,” or “Count your blessings, so-and-so is 30 and still looking.” None of this made me feel better. For one thing, it wouldn’t trouble me if Emily got married at 30. And becoming a bubbe—oy vey—was the last thing on my mind; I still had two teenagers at home.

 The truth is, I am a slow adapter and resistant to change; the idea of becoming a mother-in-law, much less a young grandmother, sent me into a tailspin. I wasn’t anxious to acquire a new set of relatives, either; I was pretty consumed with the ones I already had.

**A Time to Break the Plate**

 Before I could say “mother of the bride,” there I was toasting l’chaim, breaking a plate with Emily’s future mother-in-law, my home filled with smiling guests clapping and singing for the chossen and kallah. Amid all the mazel tovs, I couldn’t rid myself of the disappointment gnawing at my heart. I felt thrust into a role I wasn’t ready to play. And I didn’t want to share my daughter with a boy I barely knew. I wanted more time with her. Just her.

 I feared the changes marriage would bring to our relationship. Emily and I not only shared a close bond, but we were also business partners at the magazine. Even while she was in college, we talked just about every day. Raising a kid who’s also a CEO is both exhilarating and exhausting. I had been with my daughter every step of the way on her entrepreneurial journey—accompanying her to media interviews, driving her to speaking engagements, editing magazine articles, helping with promotion, trouble-shooting, number crunching, and listening to her dreams and plans for inspiring Jewish girls to creativity and leadership. And she never stopped, never gave up, all through her teenage years. How would my future son-in-law fit into this dynamic?

**Nothing Left to Do But Surrender**

 But the decision had been made, and there seemed nothing left to do but surrender. I loved my daughter and wanted to make her happy, even if I wasn’t. So, I put aside my writing projects, parked my emotions, and threw myself into full-scale wedding-planning mode. The timetable seemed as crazy as the engagement itself: four months. “Don’t worry, Mom, I can help you,” Emily assured me. Of that, I had no doubt. I just wasn’t sure I would survive it.

 Emily and I managed to avoid the dramatic conflicts one often hears about in wedding planning. Our differences centered around certain religious customs: how high the mechitza on the dance floor should be, what kind of music the band would play, and the wedding procession itself.

**Michael’s Parents Offered Incredible Support**

 During this stressful time, Michael’s parents offered incredible support. If there is a bashert for in-laws, they certainly fit the bill. They were in love with my daughter and in awe of her accomplishments. Michael’s mother’s positivity rivaled Emily’s.

 “Those two kids are going to do amazing things together. I just know it,” she gushed, no doubt sensing my trepidation. “Just embrace them. Think how blessed we all are.” Michael’s father assured my husband and me that we needn’t worry at all about Emily. She was in great hands. Having heard enough horrible in-law stories, my husband and I indeed felt blessed.

 “Dr. Price is going to question your mental state when she hears the news,” I said to Emily, half-joking, en route to her yearly physical. The irony of accompanying my engaged daughter to the pediatrician just about did me in. As I sat in the waiting room, surrounded by moms with dozing infants, I remembered how this pediatrician had once reassured me that my precocious preschooler was a normal kid: “As long as Emily seems happy, knows how to play, and has friends, you have nothing to worry about, Mrs. Krieger.”

**“What Would the Doctor Say?”**

 Now what would the doctor say?

 Turns out, she was fine with it. Dr. Price just wanted to make sure Emily had actually met her fiancé.

 “See, Mom? Not everyone thinks like you do,” Emily said on the drive home. “I’m not the typical 20-year-old.”

 Tell me about it.

 I figured that with the wedding a few weeks away, now would be a good time for The Talk. I asked her outright if she had discussed family planning with the doctor.

 “Mom, can we not talk about that?”

 I couldn’t let it go. I had wisdom on this matter. No matter how mature you may be, I told Emily, having a baby right away would jeopardize your studies and career: “You have no idea how all-consuming an infant is. Nobody does, until the day you bring one home.” I urged Emily, begged her, to postpone motherhood for a couple years at least.

 She looked out the car window. “OK, Mom, I heard what you said, and I’ll take it into consideration. But, the decision, really, is between me and my husband.”

 We drove home in silence, the word husband ringing in my ears.

 The wedding unfolded without a glitch on a sunny, picture-perfect June day, with 200 friends, family members, and a fan club of girls. I danced the hora in a cloud of disbelief; the whole event seemed like an out-of-body experience.

**No Denying It: I Had a Married Daughter**

 The morning after, to my surprise, Emily’s friends had already posted chuppah photos on Facebook. I saw the Times wedding announcement. There was no denying it: I had a married daughter.

 Michael and family members arrived later at our house for a brunch. When I saw my daughter in her new shiny sheitel, I just about lost it. Who was this young woman? I tried to be a gracious host, to act normal, until it was time for Emily and Michael to head to New York for their first sheva brachos and then move into their Brooklyn apartment. I fought back the tears, until their car pulled out of the driveway.

 My sister hugged me. “It’ll be OK.”

 But it wasn’t. The emotions I had put on hold arrived special delivery at 3:00 in the morning. I lay awake trying to get to the root of my anxiety. Did I really think she was too young for marriage? Was I worried that her dreams would be squelched? Did I think Michael was too frum?

**Meditating in Emily’s Room**

 Unable to fall back asleep, I got up and walked down the hallway to Emily’s room. I sat on her bed, the one her father had built for her, which I knew she’d probably never sleep in again. I looked at the plaques, awards, news clippings, fan letters, and bat mitzvah mementos decorating the walls. Emily’s beloved Jewish books filled one shelf, her childhood favorites on another. A pile of magazine samples sat on her desk. How long would I keep Emily’s room the same? Then I noticed a laundry basket filled with her clothes. Were those to be donated, folded, or was I supposed to wash them? I laughed. Some things never change.

 As I sat in the stillness of her room, I realized that change was what I had been fighting all along. Change, the root of our fears. Until I learned to ride that wave, I’d be stuck on shore, pining for something out of reach.

 That summer, during my wedding recovery phase, I met up with an old friend at Starbucks. When she asked me how I was doing, I told the truth: “I know I should be happy, and yet … I’m just not. I’m sad. Emily won’t be home at all this summer. I’ll miss our girl time, our family trips, the three kids staying up yakking half the night. Now when she visits, it will be with … him. They’ll probably stay in the guest room!”

 My friend, a Jewish mom of three girls, squeezed my hand. “You’re right. Things are never going to be the same. But that doesn’t mean they won’t be good. Emily will still need you, just in different ways.”

**Blinking Back Tears**

 I sipped my tea, blinking back tears.

 And then my friend said something that took me by surprise. “You need to give yourself permission to grieve.”

 “Grieve?” That sounded like an awful word to pair with a “wedding.”

 “Yes. No matter how wonderful it is for her, you are experiencing a loss. Let yourself feel it. Mourn for it, and then you can move on.”

 During the following months, my husband and I had more opportunities to get to know our son-in-law. We observed how he managed to inspire changes in Emily that we were never able to do, like eating lunch sitting down, not falling asleep with her laptop, and exercising.

 As she promised, Emily continued her studies at Yeshiva University while also growing her business and giving speaking engagements. Michael, with his youthful energy and head for business, joined her team by helping with technology and marketing.

**A Surprising and Welcome Turn**

 This surprising and welcome turn gave me some breathing room. My daughter now had someone else who would willingly listen to her business challenges, who would brainstorm with her, who would accompany her to conferences, someone who was totally devoted and not going to quit. My status as Emily’s number one fan now had a rival—except he wasn’t, he had become part of the family.

 Now, as their first anniversary approaches, I’ve come to the conclusion that no matter when and how you do it, marriage is an act of faith—there is no formula or guarantee. I can think of couples I know, religious and secular, who followed different paths to the altar: marrying young, marrying old, long courtship, short engagement, living together, or remarrying—each ending in divorce. Surely, by midlife I have learned that no one path is right.

 And yet, having heard so many stories of delayed adulthood, failure-to-launch kids, and aimless twenty-somethings, I know I should count my blessings. I have a responsible daughter with dreams and goals and a life plan. So, she launched herself earlier than the typical American teenager. Can’t I live with that? Emily found a wonderful guy; he just happened to show up a few years early. My job now is to work on embracing the changes her new life brings. To accept change is the beginning of letting go, which is something every parent must do—sooner or later.

*Reprinted from the November 8, 2013 email of Tablet Magazine.*

**The Golden Column**

**Rabbi Aharon Hakohen, zs”l**

Throughout his life, Rabbi Aharon Hakohen zs”l achieved great honor and stature. He served as the head of the Jewish court in Ssina, the capital of Yemen. He was proficient in all areas of the Torah, and was a renown lover and pursuer of peace, one who loved people and brought them closer to Torah.

The ruler of Yemen wanted to appoint him to the position of Chief Rabbi, but the tzadik refused to accept the position, preferring to earn a livelihood through his own work. He therefore became a tailor, and he made coats. He was a skilled craftsman, and his coats were unmatched in their beauty and distinction.

**Prominent Officials Wanted Him to**

**Create Their Custom-Made Outfits**

The work was done honestly, with precision and skill down to the last detail. Every stitch ended up in the precise location, nothing was skipped or overlooked. Eventually, prominent officials waited in the rabbi’s home for him to take their measurements and design for them magnificent, custom-made outfits, appropriate for men of their stature.

Rabbi Aharon, however, took his time, as he spent hours in the Bet Midrash, learning, teaching, and ruling on matters of halachah. He spent most of the time in Bet Midrash Alsherabi, and only when he finished his studies he would go home to greet the officials. They, however, were not used to being treated in this manner. “Tell us,” they ordered, “what makes you think that you can treat us this way, leaving us waiting here for several hours?”

Rabbi Aharon answered calmly, “If you don’t mind, allow me to first ask you a question. Which is more important - the body or soul?”

“Obviously, the soul is more important. Now please answer our question!”

“The answer is obvious,” he replied. “You wait here for me to make you clothing to cover your bodies. In the Bet Midrash, I sew clothing for my soul. You yourselves admitted that the soul is more important!”

*Reprinted from the Chaya Sarah 5774 edition of the Aram Soba Newsletter.*

Jewish Cheerleader

In the Bible Belt:

My evangelical coach made me discover what it means to be a Jew.

**By** [**Gevura Davis**](http://www.aish.com/authors/48869022.html)

Growing up in the Bible Belt, I relished the opportunity to say "I'm Jewish, and I love it." Of course it was all a front. I was very embarrassed not to wear a cross; I desperately wished that we could have been just like everybody else. Because I had no idea how to answer all of the questions about JC, why we don't believe in the New Testament, and why we went to synagogue on Saturday instead of Sunday, I put on the best performance about how great being Jewish was.

Until high school, my Jewish pride had never really been challenged. Except for the occasional fanatic who insisted that I would burn in hell, things were generally pretty calm.

**The Day My Life Changes So Clearly**

I remember the day that it all changed so clearly. Cheerleading practice began like any other: rehearsal of dance routines, me being thrown into the air in a stunt, and a lot of overly confident teenage girls arguing. Then came the water break. We were all sitting around chatting, when our evangelical coach piped up.

"Girls, I want to tell you something. Not nearly enough of you have been attending the student athlete church service, the meet you at the pole prayer group, or the Federation of Christian Athletes events."

*Something inside of me started to stir.*

"Now, I don't want to have to keep reminding you ladies. Church involvement is essential to the success of the football team."

*My discomfort turned to anger.*

"All of the Varsity squad has been going, and look how good their team is doing."

*The frustration was mounting.*

"Reverand Smith will be at lunch in the cafeteria --"

*The words jumped forth from my throat without my control...*

"Coach Turner, I don't think this is any of our business. You're way out of line. Just leave us alone about your Church. We have the right to go or not go." My heart was pounding with nervousness and anger.

**My Adrenaline Was Still Contorting**

Before I could finish, she put up her hand, signaling me to finish.

We all paused and then the captain broke in, "Why don't we all go get some water in the main building."

As I walked toward the building, my adrenaline was still contorting and the perspiration was dripping down my temples.

*Good for you* , I thought to myself. *That should finally keep her quiet. But what's the rest of the squad thinking?*

One by one, my peers padded me on the back. "Way to go, Lauren. I am happy you said something. You go girl."

They were all on my side. Little did I know that those words would soon mean nothing and that within a week I'd find myself fighting the entire school.

**The Ultimatum**

After practice Coach Turner approached me. "Don't worry Lauren, I forgive you. I won't kick you off the cheerleading squad, but I have discussed this incident with the head coach and you only need to serve three detentions for your blatant insubordination."Overnight, I went from one of the most popular cheerleaders to borderline pariah.

 I refused to serve the detentions, triggering a spiraling descent of back and forth between myself and the coach who was forcefully trying to maintain her control of the squad. She finally issued an ultimatum: either I serve the detentions or she – the most beloved coach – will quit.

The calls started coming in. One by one, my peers who I thought were my best friends started mounting pressure. "Come on Lauren, really it's no big deal. Just serve the stupid detentions. You know you were being a little disrespectful to Coach Turner. We're in the middle of the season and can't afford to lose her."

Suddenly teachers, parents, football players, and administrators started treating me like a total outcast. Dirty looks, rude comments, and the cold shoulder were some of the tactics they used to get me to back down from my position.

I was dumbfounded. These were adults, and I was 15. No one seemed to take my feelings into account. Overnight, I went from one of the most popular cheerleaders to borderline pariah.

**The Family of the Only**

**Other Jewish Cheerleader**

The most painful slight came from the family of the only other Jewish cheerleader. With the mom's money and help, her two kids had risen to top of the social ladder, and she was determined not to let me undermine her vision. She had slyly convinced all of the other cheerleading parents that this was not about religion; after all, I didn't even have a Bat Mitzvah like her daughter had. My parents instilled in me abundant Jewish pride, but deep down there was a vacuum in place of knowledge.

 But the most challenging thing was the internal questions I could not answer: *"Why did I care so much about my religion anyway? What's really the big deal about going to a church once in a while? Don't we all believe in the same God and the same Bible?"* My parents were very proud Jews and instilled in me abundant Jewish pride, but deep down there was a vacuum in place of knowledge.

**The Showdown**

The showdown came a few weeks later, with the help of the local ADL and my parents. The coach brought me to the principal's office in an attempt to force me to either serve the detentions or be dismissed from the cheerleading squad. Despite all the vicious attacks against me, I proudly articulated my position as eloquently as I could. Thankfully, the principal was African-American who was particularly sensitive to minority rights, and he agreed that I should not be forced to serve the detentions.

It was a short-lived victory. Coach Turner quit the squad that afternoon and everyone blamed me.

I was bombarded with emotions: proud, angry, hurt, betrayed, confused. I felt an incredible burden of responsibility that I didn't ask for, but was something that I inherited from every generation of Jews that preceded me. Of course, Jews in previous generations suffered infinitely worse persecution to maintain their identity. But in the heat of that teenage moment, my life seemed quite dramatic: a reform Jewish cheerleader in the heart of Georgia defending her right to maintain a Jewish identity free from persecution and persuasion.

Coach Turner did indeed quit, but the football team went on to win the championships without her there to pray for us, and the cloud of controversy surrounding me eventually settled down. My cheerleading career came to an end after it was hinted to me that I shouldn't bother trying out for the Varsity squad the following year; my position on the squad had already been replaced. I decided to take up journalism the next year, find a new crowd of friends, and start taking school seriously.

**Nagging Questions**

But those nagging questions that I couldn't answer would not be quieted. *Why does being Jewish really matter anyway? Why not simply follow the crowd?* I began my quest for understanding what it means to be a Jew. Instead of following all my friends to the University of Georgia, I made the courageous decision to attend Emory University which had a very active Jewish life. It would be my first time having a chance to get to know Jewish peers. I felt I was on the cusp of an exciting discovery.

In the first semester of my sophomore year, I enrolled in a Holocaust Studies class taught by renowned author and historian Deborah Lipstadt. Having just returned from her famous trial with Holocaust denier David Irving in England, the course was very popular, filling a very large auditorium with a few hundred mostly Jewish students.

**Deeply Affected by My Studies of the Holocaust**

I watched and read about the horrors of World War II in extremely graphic and shocking detail, and I was deeply affected.

I remember leaving the auditorium one freezing day in November, sitting on a bench and crying, "How dear God could You have allowed such senseless misery, such torture to so many innocent souls?"

A few of my friends came over to me. When I told them why I was crying, their response shocked me. "Move on, Lauren. It's over. We have a social to get ready for tonight. I know you're sensitive, but nothing like this will ever happen again."

But I couldn't just "move on."

I almost wished for a second encounter with Coach Turner.

I decided to take a UJC college mission trip to the Ukraine and Israel for winter break. I came back very inspired, dedicated to raising money and awareness for their cause. I felt different. Sorority life began to feel surreal and superficial.

Following Prof. Lipstadt's recommendation, I went to Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I finally began to ponder some of those nagging questions and discovered I was in the best place to seek out a wide range of answers. All of Jerusalem seemed to be teeming with Jewish students struggling with the ultimate issues: What is our purpose here? What does it mean to be Jewish? Why is it so important that the Jewish people not assimilate? How can I truly make the world a better place?

**Filling the Vacuum with Jewish Knowledge**

That vacuum inside of me began to slowly fill with knowledge based on Jewish learning and growth. I almost wished for a second encounter with Coach Turner.

Today I am married to a rabbi, and we are dedicated to working together to make the world a better a place, to do as much good as we can, and take care of as many people as possible, starting with our children, our community and the whole world.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Aish.com*

**Chassidic Story #832**

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**No Loans**

**From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

Editor@ascentofsafed.com

**Rabbi Avraham Rottenberg** is a Gerrer chasid who currently lives in Bnei Brak. Quite poor, he was often faced with economic difficulties that nearly every other Israeli would try to assuage at best temporarily through obtaining a loan. But not Rottenberg: “No loans! They are not for me” was his habitual refrain.

Once, an acquaintance of his, who was a man of means, and aware of Rottenberg’s desperate situation at the time, offered him an interest-free loan. It was refused.

The friend continued to urge him. “If it is the procedures that make you hesitant, you need’t worry; I’ll take care of everything. I’ll even arrange the three guarantors to sign for you.

Again the answer was “No.” The man persisted, and from the goodness of his heart continued, “I’m in no hurry to get the money back. You can take all the time you want.”

“Thank you, but no thank you,” responded Rottenberg gently. “It is not that I am concerned about my ability to pay back the money. It is simply that this is a guiding principle in my life.”

**The Origins of His Refusal to**

**Borrow Go Back to the 1950s**

In order to understand from where came this principle and how it came to be so firmly implanted in Rabbi Avraham Rottenberg, we have to go all the way back to the 1950s.

Rottenberg was a young married man then, whom circumstances had brought to be living in the Crown Heights district of Brooklyn, N.Y., the neighborhood of **the Lubavitcher Rebbe.**

Although Rottenberg was, as we already mentioned, a chasid of Gur, not Chabad, like many others he was curious about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who seemed so different in style than the other Chasidic rebbes, so he often attended the Rebbe’s public gatherings (*farbrengens)*, and other events in 770 Eastern Parkway, World Lubavitch Headquarters.

Captivated by the Rebbe’s wisdom and charisma, and the Rebbe’s obvious holiness, he began to turn to him for advice, through correspondence, a pattern that he maintained for nearly 40 years, until the Rebbe’s final illness. Over that time, Rabbi Rottenberg received nearly 100 letters from the Rebbe! tThe envy of many Lubavitcher Chasidim.

**During a Farbrengen of the Rebbe**

In one of the *farbrengens* of the Rebbe, during a break between the Rebbe’s successive discourses (*sichos*), the listeners as usual were raising their voices in song and lifting their small cups of wine or vodka to toast L’*chaim*/for life.

At that moment Rabbi Rottenberg noticed that one of the Chabad Chasidim had approached the Rebbe with a personal request. Situated close to the front, he was able to overhear their exchange of words. The man was requesting a blessing for his friend whose financial situation was desperate. Surprisingly the Rebbe was not quick with his blessing. Instead, he asked the petitioner, “For what does he need money?”

The chasid was confused by the unexpected response. Stammering, he repeated the question, “For what does he need?”

The Rebbe paused in thought. After a few moments he stated decisively, “For what he needs, he has. The problem is that he has become used to borrowing money and not returning it.”

The Rebbe paused a few more moments, then added, “When he accepts upon himself the obligation to return all that he owes, and makes a firm commitment to not take any more loans, then [and only then] he will be able to receive from the Al-mighty, directly.”

**Deeply Affected by the**

**Exchange He Overheard**

Rabbi Rottenberg found himself deeply affected by the exchange he had overheard, even though the words had not been directed to him personally, or even to the public in general, but rather to a specific individual in his own unique situation. He felt he had been privileged to hear the Rebbe confirm one of his own principles “that whoever believes that the Al-mighty concerns Himself with all of our needs, removes from himself the need to ever have to borrow money.”

Right then, seated at the *farbrengen*, Rabbi Rottenberg vowed silently to himself that, whatever would happen, he would never take a loan. It was up to him to trust absolutely that G-d would provide for him whatever he needed.

Decades later, Rabbi Rottenberg faced a difficult test of his resolve. In 1980 he was blessed to make a wedding for one of his grown children, and the burden of all the expenses, direct and indirect, was more so much more then he could bear. To take a loan seemed the only logical and practical means to relieve the unyielding pressure, and he was hanging on by the skin of his teeth to his resolve not to do so.

**On the Morning of the Wedding He**

**Didn’t Even Have Money for a Taxi**

Nevertheless, it seemed he would have to give in. On the morning of the wedding day, he was without even a dollar to give to the caterer, the owner of the wedding hall, the photographer, or the band. He didn’t even have enough cash in his pocket for the taxi to take his family from his house to the hall.

Rabbi Rottenberg remained stubborn despite all this, and refused to consider taking a loan. But how was he supposed to get his family to the wedding hall?

Although already dressed in his wedding clothes, he decided to duck into a nearby *shul* to pray again for Divine aid. While he was praying, a man entered the *shul* whose appearance stamped him as a Chabad chasid. This turned out to be **Rabbi Moshe Yeraslovsky** [of blessed memory, father of the current head of the Chabad Rabbinical court in Israel -editor.]. He glanced around at those present in the room, until his eyes settled upon Rabbi Rottenberg. Approaching him he said, “Based upon the way you are dressed, I suspect this is a day of celebration for you.”

“That’s correct. It is my son’s wedding day, may it be a good and auspicious time.”

“Ah,” said Rabbi Moshe Yeraslovsky “And how much money are you short?”

“Why are you asking?”wondered Rabbi Rottenberg, notunderstanding at all where Rabbi Moshe Yeraslovsky was heading. And why did he phrase it “How much” as if he knew for sure about his lack, rather than “do you have enough?”

**A Mission from the Rebbe**

“Let me explain,” smiled Rabbi Moshe Yeraslovsky.”I just arrived back in Israel this morning, only a few hours ago I was in Brooklyn, visiting the Lubavitcher Rebbe and the community.

“Last night I merited to have a private audience with the Rebbe, face-to-face, just the two of us! As we were finishing, the Rebbe opened the drawer of his desk and took out a thick wad of dollars. He then extended the money to me, saying, ‘You are leaving now to *Eretz Yisrael*. Sometimes one meets there a Jew who is making a wedding and needs cash desperately. You can give this money to him.’

From the time I landed this morning, I’ve been seeking to fulfill my mission from the Rebbe. You are the first one to plead guilty to making a wedding. Therefore I am positive that you are the one for whom the Rebbe intended this gift, according to his words.”

So thanks to the Rebbe, Rabbi Rottenberg was able to maintain his commitment to not accept loans, and in a most respectable, pleasant manner!

Translated and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Geula* #635.

*Connection*: Last Week’s reading - expenses (see *Rashi* on Gen 29:22)

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