**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas yisro 5776**

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**Rav Dovid of Lelov**

**The Incredible “Good Morning” Greeting**

 R’ Dovid and his friend, R’ Lipa of Nevapeleh, were once walking in the countryside when they came across a small village which housed one Jewish family.  They found only a young man at home.  They wished him good morning, he responded, and they continued on their way.

Soon they saw the young man and his father running after them, calling “Stop!  Stop!”

When they caught up with the two tzaddikim, the father explained, “I want to offer you a gift. My son has been mute his whole life.  His ‘good morning’ to you were the first words he ever spoke!  Please come to our home and let us honor you.”

R’ Dovid modestly, yet with all sincerity, said to R’ Lipa, “Hashem has shown us great kindness and we did not even know it.  If that young man had not answered our greeting, we might have assumed that he considered it beneath his dignity since we seemed to be vagrants.  Then we would have been terribly upset to see such character traits in a Jew.  Heaven granted him speech just to save us from a terrible mistake!”

*Reprinted from last week’s email (Parshas Beshallach 5776) of The Weekly Vort.*

**It Once Happened**

**A Talented Singer**

**And the Shabbat**

**By Dudu Fisher**



Dudu Fisher

It was the winter night of 5 Shevat 5692/1932. A Jewish woman by the name of Fraida Gisha was in her ninth month of pregnancy in Riga, Latvia. A serious problem arose and the doctors recommended ending the pregnancy to save the woman's life.

The woman said to the doctors: "Wait, don't do anything." And to her sister standing next to her she said, "Leah, go and pray for me in shul."

Leah walked to the shul in the middle of the night. She entered and approached the holy ark. There she poured out her heart to G-d. She prayed and cried. Suddenly she felt a hand on her shoulder. She turned around and saw an older woman.

"Why are you crying?" asked the woman. Leah told her about her sister in the hospital.

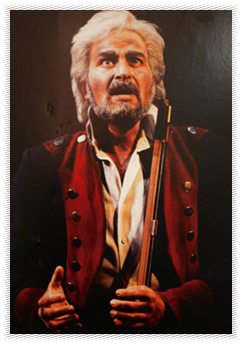
"Come with me," said the woman. She took her to the home of the (previous) Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn. Leah wrote a note, said her sister was ill and the doctors were concerned and even wanted to end the pregnancy.

The Rebbe's faithful secretary, Rabbi Yechezkel Feigin, gave the note to the Rebbe. Five minutes later he came out of the Rebbe's room and gave Leah a letter with a response for her sister: "G-d should help you so that all will be well and so that you give birth to a healthy, live child."

With trembling hands, Leah took this letter and returned to the hospital. As she walked in, all the doctors came running to her and exclaimed: We have no idea what happened here but an hour after you left, your sister went into a normal labor and a girl was born.' That was my mother. This baby girl was my mother.

We have the original note in a safe but everyone in the family, including me, of course, have a photocopy of the letter with them. When I travel the world, the letter is always in my pocket. Anybody in the family who gives birth takes the letter with her to the hospital.

For many years I was a cantor, just like my grandfather wanted me to be. One day, I was traveling in London and I saw the musical Les Miserables. As I sat there, I thought, I can do that.



**Dudu Fisher in the role of Jean Valjean**

**In the popular musical Les Miserables**

When the musical arrived in Israel, I went to audition and was given the lead role of Jean Valjean. During the performance, the British producer Cameron Mackintosh came over to me and said: "Dudu, after you finish performing here in Israel, I want you to perform on Broadway."

I was thrilled. I couldn't believe it. I, Dudu Fisher of Petach Tikva, Israel, would appear on Broadway?

But I told him I didn't think that will be possible. He asked me why not and I explained that I am a religious Jew and I do not work on Friday night and Saturday.

A few months later I got a phone call from him, telling me triumphantly that he had managed to arrange that all the performances would take place only on weekdays.

Two months passed and there was another call from Mackintosh. This time, he had bad news. "Dudu," he said, "there's a problem. All the professional organizations are against me and are unwilling to change the dates to weekdays only. I am fighting them all and as of now, I am not winning."

I was so very disappointed. My mother suggested that I go to the Rebbe.

At first I said to her: "People go to the Rebbe with serious problems of health, livelihood, and children. I should go to talk to the Rebbe about Broadway?"

But my mother urged me and I went. I thought I would need to explain my entire situation to the Rebbe but to my surprise, he immediately understood the issue. He looked straight at me and said: "Hold strong with Yiddishkeit (Torah and its commandments) and everything will be fine."

The Rebbe's look was so powerful. I looked at the Rebbe's eyes and felt calm. I felt certain that everything really would be fine. I resolved to stand strong on my principles and not perform on Shabbat.

Two months later I got a phone call from Mackintosh who told me that he had won the fight on my behalf, and I could perform on Broadway without compromising on Sabbath observance.

It was a miracle; until I got this job without Shabbat and Jewish holiday performances, there was no such thing. And afterward, until today, there has been nothing like it. I auditioned for many other shows and always, the moment it came to Shabbat observance, it fell through.

It's not an easy test. But those words of the Rebbe, "Hold strong with Yiddishkeit," continue to strengthen me all the time.

(Editor’s Note) He played the role on [New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York)'s [*Broadway*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadway_theatre) during the winter of 1993-1994, and later at London's [*West End*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_End_theatre), where he was invited to perform before [Queen Elizabeth II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II_of_the_United_Kingdom). At both venues, Fisher was the first performer excused from Friday night and Saturday performances, as he is an [Orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism) [Jew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew) and was not able to perform because of the [Sabbath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shabbat).

*Reprinted from the Parsha Bo 5776 edition of L’Chaim Weekly, a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY. Originally printed in the Beis Moshiach Magazine.*

**Emergency Landing**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**

A man by the name of Daniel Assor, from Israel, tells the following story about himself. After finishing his service in the IDF, he, along with some friends, moved to New York with the dream of becoming wealthy. They started a business distributing fashion accessories, and before long, they were making a lot of money. Daniel got a pilot's license and bought his own plane.

During his time in New York, Daniel veered off the path of Judaism, got mixed up with the wrong people and married a Dutch Catholic. Daniel always had a yearning for spirituality, as did his wife. They investigated all types of religions. Eventually, they met some nice Christians and joined their Bible study group, deciding to practice Christianity. They became very involved with the church, and Daniel even became a Catholic missionary. Nevertheless, in the recesses of his mind, he was never quite settled with his path.

Daniel's dream was to become a flight instructor. He and his wife moved to Florida, where he pursued a degree in professional aviation. At college, there was a class on theology, given by a priest who had studied at the Vatican for ten years. The class was supposed to explore all the different religions. It was very appealing to Daniel. When it came time to discuss Judaism, the priest said that there was once a man named Abraham who worshiped the god of the mountain whose name was Shin Dalet Yud. Daniel raised his hand and said, "I know Judaism. That's a mistake. Shin Dalet Yud is the name of Hashem, not a mountain god. It's on the outside of every mezuzah."

Another student got up and angrily told Daniel to keep his comments to himself. There was a lot of tension in the room, and the teacher called a short break. A student came over to Daniel and said, "We're here to get good grades; don't start controversy now." Daniel replied, "I'm here to find the truth."

When they went back to class, the teacher was waiting by the door. He told Daniel, "You got your hundred in this class. You don't need to come anymore. Go to the library, and I'll send you people who need help." Daniel knew that this priest didn't want him in the class because he would challenge him. He felt something was not right and became confused. There were some other stories that he told where he felt that Hashem was talking to him and telling him to come back to Judaism.

One night, he was driving home, feeling very emotional. He passed by a church and felt the need to pray. He went in. It was dark and basically empty. He looked around at the high ceilings and the pictures on the wall, and he started talking to G-d. He said, "I'm 33 years old, married and successful, but I'm confused. Something is telling me to go back to Israel, but I don't know where I belong. G-d, I am searching for You. I'm interested in the truth. Please give me a sign." He stayed there for a while, crying, and then he went home.

Meanwhile, Daniel's sister married a former priest who had converted to Judaism. That man contacted Daniel and told him what he was doing was wrong. He wanted to meet to discuss theology. When the priests in Florida heard about this, they saw it as an opportunity to win him back to Christianity. They set Daniel up with a private training program, showing him all the possible arguments and counter arguments.

A few months later, he met his brother-in-law for a debate. They argued for days and then continued for months of correspondence back and forth. After a year, Daniel concluded that Christianity was false and stopped going to church. His wife was so upset with him that she gave him an ultimatum: If he can't see eye to eye with her on religion, they would have to separate.

As difficult as it was for him, Daniel decided to leave. However, he didn't come back to Judaism yet. He wanted to get involved again in his old business. He called his friends and said that he wanted to take merchandise and fly it to the Florida Keys himself. He made one delivery to Key West and landed the plane at 1:00 in the morning.

He was on his way back to Miami in the middle of the night, when he heard the weather report. It sounded very bad. He was supposed to refuel in Key Largo, but air traffic control said that weather was too bad to land there. Then, suddenly, his left engine went out. He contacted Miami, and they asked how much fuel he had. He told them and they said, "You're going to need an emergency landing. There's an emergency Air Force landing strip in the middle of the ocean. You'll have to find it and land there." At that moment, his second engine quit. He was 7000 feet in the air now and gliding. He said that it was too dark to find that emergency landing strip.

Uncharacteristically, ground control then asked him, "Where are you from?" "Israel," he replied. They said, "Does that mean you're a Jew?" "Why?" he asked. They responded, "Because you'd better start praying. You're in big trouble."

 They told him to jump out of the plane when it got close to the water. However, he was too afraid to plunge into the dark, shark infested waters. He was losing altitude fast, and the situation was becoming desperate. He felt that he was about to lose his life. He screamed from the depths of his heart, "Shema Yisrael," with all of his might.

Suddenly, he felt the wheels hitting the ground and he slammed on the brakes. It was pitch black and pouring rain. When the plane came to a screeching halt, he opened the door. He saw water to the left. He opened the other door and saw water to the right. He got out of his plane and discovered that he had miraculously hit the emergency landing strip, and his plane had stopped just five feet before the water began again. He just sat there shaking until a rescue crew came.

When he was taken back to safety, all he could think about was that "Shema Yisrael" and that Hashem had saved his life. He started going to shul and learning with a Rabbi Biton, who eventually advised him to move back to Israel. There, he got married to a baalat teshuva and had seven children. He went on to study Torah for many years in the kollel at Yehave Da'at.

Today, Rabbi Daniel Assor is involved in bringing Jews back to Hashem. In an amazing string of events orchestrated by Hashem, a Jew who was so far away came back. Hashem wants everybody, no matter how far they have strayed.

*Reprinted from the January 12, 2015 email of Rabbi David Ashear’s Daily Emunah email.*

**Who is Really Doing the**

**Other an Amazing Favor?**

**By Rabbi Yosef Weiss**

Shimshon was driving home from New York to Lakewood on a busy Friday afternoon.  Stopping at a red light on Route 9, he noticed a yeshivah man standing on the other side of the traffic barrier next to a broken-down car and four cranky children.

Shimshon turned his car around at the next opportunity and offered his help.  The young man, who introduced himself as Aharon Buxbaum, explained that he had been on his way to spend Shabbos with his wife, who was recuperating in Seagate, NY after having given birth to a baby girl.

His children were so looking forward to spending Shabbos with their mother, but now, with a broken transmission, he would have to disappoint them.

Shimshon was moved by their story and felt very sorry for the family.  Shimshon exclaimed, “Listen, you take my car to Seagate, and I will make my way back to Lakewood.”

Aharon was overcome by this generous offer.  “You don’t even know me!  This is such an incredible favor!  I can’t accept.”

But Shimshon was insistent and finally Aharon gave in.  His car was towed away, Shimshon made his way to Lakewood with a hitch, and the Buxbaums drove to Seagate in Shimshon’s car where they spent a delightful Shabbos.

Aharon returned the car on Motzei Shabbos, thanking Shimshon profusely.  As he left, he asked, “What can I do for you in return?”

While Shimshon refused a favor in return, his wife called out that perhaps there was something Aharon could do for them.  “Please help us find a shidduch for our daughter.  She is such a wonderful girl.  Perhaps you know someone?”

Aharon took the request to heart.  He suggested a fine young man who became Shimshon’s son-in-law.  Shimshon never realized on that Friday afternoon how magnanimously his favor would be repaid!  (Visions of Greatness, Vol. 5)

*Reprinted from last week’s email (Parshas Beshallach 5776) of The Weekly Vort.*

**[Are You Afraid To](http://www.mayanyisroel.net/templates/blog/post.asp?aid=2792698&PostID=58670&p=1)**

**[Visit Yerushalayim](http://www.mayanyisroel.net/templates/blog/post.asp?aid=2792698&PostID=58670&p=1)?**

**By Rabbi Yoseph Vigler**

Eretz Yisroel has been in our headlines the past few months, with terror attacks perpetrated on a constant basis, many in the heart of Yerushalayim, in places where everyone visits and walks.

Last Shabbos I had the zechus of celebrating a beautiful bar mitzvah of a good friend's son in Yerushalayim. Making a simcha there is, I believe, a shlichus in its own right. When you go to Eretz Yisroel, you are making a statement that the land and the city are ours forever and we will walk those streets until the arrival of Moshiach.

On the return flight one lady shared with me, how she had been sick with worry for a whole month prior to her trip wondering "Why, oh why, am I taking myself and my children into a danger zone?!" In her mind she was envisioning the worst possible scenarios.

No doubt she is not alone, the fear is expressed by many.

It is nothing short of a miracle that I couldn't find one empty seat on our flight to Eretz Yisroel and ticket prices are sky high. People are traveling to the Holy Land and the place is bustling and alive!

Fear is in the mind!  There REALLY is no fear walking the streets of Yerushalayim. The locals feel the same sense of security you feel in NYC. I would submit that if you compare statistics, there are more homicides per ca-pita in NYC than in Yerushalayim.

Chas veshalom we should ever accept this terror as "normal".

Chas veshalom we should ever have to endure even one more barbarity!

But even as our hearts bleed from the unspeakable pain of the atrocities, and the 'himmel geshrai,” that does not render the streets of Yerushalayim unsafe.

Yerushalayim is NOT a Makom Sakana!

Because we are focused on these horrors and we watch every detail and replay the security cameras over and over, we paralyze ourselves with fear of going there. Our tendency is to blow things out of proportion, magnifying tiny parnassa problems and isolated terror attacks.

Put things into perspective. Deal with the problem factually. One plane crashing is one too many, but not a reason to stop flying. For some reason we relish our worrying, we actually enjoy the feeling of expecting the worst so that we are "prepared".

"I couldn't believe it,” this lady told me, "Yerushalayim is so normal, it really is.” "My mother worries,” one yeshiva bochur told me. "But I live here, and it is completely normal".

Yes, you need to be vigilant, but no, Eretz Yisroel is NOT a place of danger. The eyes of G-d are upon the land always.

No doubt it is Divine Power that Eretz Yisroel is still safe and tourism is still at a peak and the place is bustling with activity.

Go visit, I'd love to hear regards from Yerushalayim!

*Reprinted from the January 22, 2016 email of the Mayan Torah Center in Flatbush.*

**The Night that the Town’s**

**Rov Didn’t Come Home**

**By Rabbi Dov Brezak**

This true story that is told by Rav Y. Zilbershtein , who mentions that it was heard from very reliable sources.

The gaon Rebbi Ben Zion of Ostrova was the Av Beis Din of the city Gustinin.

In this city although most people would leave the community shul to go home after the last maariv minyan in the winter the candles in the shul and the heater oven were still left burning for another three hours. The reason being that the rov would stay in shul to learn after maariv. He would encourage others to do the same and as was often the case-numerous people would often remain with the rov in shul after maariv to learn.

**One Freezing Cold Winter Night**

On one freezing cold winter night the rebbetzin awoke at midnight only to find that the rov had not yet come home from shul. She calmed herself by saying that her husband had probably come home already but had to go out and help someone in the community that needed help.

But when she awoke again at 3 am and saw that her husband was not home she woke up her sons and asked them to go looking for their father , the rov.

The boys began searching all the streets in town but to their dismay he was nowhere to be found. As the other sons continued searching one of them thought to go search in the community shul. Perhaps our father is still there for some reason, he said to himself.

**Opened the Door to the Shul**

Sure enough as he opened the door to the shul there was their father sitting in his chair. As he entered the shul his father kept whispering, “Quiet quiet, please do not make noise.”

As the son move closer he saw something very strange. Next to his father was a peasant man sleeping on the bench. Apparently this simple Jew who had been passing through the town needed a place to sleep and he went into the shul and laid down on the bench.

But why had his father remained in shul this entire time?

What became clear later on was, just as the son had thought, that while the rov was sitting and learning this passerby came into shul laid down on the bench and went to sleep. He placed his heavy sack on the bench, beneath his head and used it as a pillow.

**The Other End of the Sack**

**Was on the Rov’s Coat**

Without realizing the other end of the sack was on the rov’s coat. The man sunk into a deep sleep and the rov was afraid that if he would move to get up the sack would move and fall on the floor. This would cause the man to get up. And that is something the rov was not prepared to do .

So sat the rav of Gustinin for hours without moving even a bit. All this in order not to wake up the stranger, who came into shul, parked himself on the shul bench, and went to sleep.

The son of the rov used all kinds of hand motions to try and convince his father to stand up carefully and carefully remove his coat from under the sack but the rov was too afraid to do so.

He remained his chair without moving until dawn. As the people began coming into shul for shacharis they were in shock by what they saw. At the same time they were astounded and awed by the greatness of their rov.

**A Transformation in**

**The Simple Yid**

When the man woke up the people of the shul told him what had happened. He felt very bad for the discomfort he had caused the rov and at the same time was amazed by the greatness of Rabbi Ben Zion, Rav of Gustinin. He approached the rov and asked his forgiveness.

After the rov gladly forgave him, the man made known that from here on he will be remaining in this beis hamedrash and he will be dedicating his life for learning Torah.

“The way the rov conducted himself shows me clearly that this shul and this community is a special place where truth and peace reside.”

The man remained true to his word and within a short few years he went on to become a very big talmid chochom and a great yirei shamayim.

(Barchi Nafshi Shmos pg 130)

*Reprinted from last week’s email (Parsha Beshallach 5776) of Peh Tahor.*

**Middos**

**Rav Shlomo Zalman and**

**The Shidduch Question**

Once, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach’s sister asked him about a possible Shidduch for her daughter, in the presence of Rav Shlomo Zalman’s wife. Rav Shlomo Zalman replied, “He’s a fine boy”.

When his sister was ready to leave, Rav Shlomo Zalman suggested she visit their other sister who lived in the same neighborhood. She thought it was a nice idea and agreed, and went to visit her sister. After visiting the sister and was leaving her house, she was surprised to see Rav Shlomo Zalman waiting outside for her.

Immediately he approached her and said, “You asked me about a certain young man for a Shidduch. It would have been more appropriate if you had asked the question in private. You see, the Rebbetzin was also there in the room, and why should she have to hear Lashon Hara?”

He then told her, “Don’t go ahead with the match. He’s a fine boy, but he’s not for your daughter”. Rav Shlomo Zalman’s son-in-law, Rav Yitzchok Yerucham Borodiansky, said about this story, “This is what is called ‘living according to the Shulchan Aruch’. Rav Shlomo Zalman was required to report the negative opinion to his sister however, to someone not involved like the Rebbetzin, it would be considered Lashon Hara.

“We can also see the remarkable delicacy in which Rav Shlomo Zalman behaved. He didn’t want to tell the Rebbetzin to leave the room, but he also didn’t want her to hear Lashon Hara. Therefore, he devised a plan where he sent his sister to his other sister’s house and waited for her to speak with her there. His sensitivity is truly remarkable!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Beshallach 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Stories compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**The Miraculous Downfall**

**Of Ivan the Evil**

**By Miriam Nevel**

In the early 1900s, Zeide Eliezer and Bubbe Rochel Leah Paltiel lived with their five children in a village in Belarus called Zhudilovo, which was under the rule of the Russian czar. The nearby forest was the source of their livelihood, as Zeide Eliezer was a logger. He rented land from the Russian owner, and he and his sons felled trees and floated the logs down the Dnieper River in long barges to the big cities, where they would be used by builders.



**Rochel Leah Paltiel, grandmother of the author**

My father,Berel, remembers his oldest brother, Yaakov, sometimes seating him on the saddle of his horse and giving him rides between the woods and home. Thus, the sound of the saw, the smell of freshly cut wood, and the tall trees of the forest were as natural to little Berel as the sights, sounds and smells of his own home.

Since Eliezer and his older sons were in the business of cutting trees, and wood was plentifully available to them, they decided to build an addition to their small home. At that time, Yaakov was studying at the *yeshivah* of theRebbe Rashab, Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch, so Zeide Eliezer sent a message to Yaakov to ask the rebbe for a blessing to build the addition. Yaakov relayed the rebbe’s answer to his father: building two additional rooms to his home would be a blessed endeavor, and he should proceed with his plan.



**Eliezer Paltiel, grandfather of the author**

The head of the Duma (village governing council) in my grandparents’ village was a wicked man named Ivan Stepanovich. Like the evil Haman, he was always on the lookout for some excuse to harm the Jews, particularly to pin some crime on Zeide Eliezer, whom he considered a “rich Jew.”

The truth is, besides the little house in which he and his family lived, Zeide had almost no material possessions, so why did Stepanovich resent him? Perhaps because when Stepanovich passed by their small home on a Friday night, he heard the family singing; whenever he entered Zeide’s home, he saw the family sitting at their festive meal as though they were princes and princesses. In short, the little wooden house was filled with learning and love and joy—the kind of love and joy that no money can buy.

When Stepanovich noticed that Eliezer and his sons were building an addition to their house, he devised a plan to endanger them, and perhaps even incite a pogrom! As head of the village governing council, Stepanovich decided to create a new law in the village. Going forward, whoever built a new house, or remodeled his existing house in any way, needed to apply for a permit to do the work. Not surprisingly, the permit was to be granted by none other than “His Excellency,” the village Duma head himself. The new rule was voted on and passed by the village elders, so that now altering one’s home without a permit was considered a crime.

An official letter was delivered to Eliezer Paltiel from the village of Zhudilovo, ordering him to stop building immediately and to appear in court in the city of Pochep on an appointed day, as he was charged with breaking the new permit law.

Zeide Eliezer dispatched an urgent message to the rebbe asking how he should proceed, because it was clear to him that the permit issue could turn into a very dangerous situation for his family, as well as for other Jews in the surrounding district. Should he stop building altogether? How should he handle the court date? Zeide Eliezer beseeched the Rebbe Rashab for his advice and blessing.

The answer they received astounded the family. The rebbe simply told Zeide Eliezer and his sons to continue building without fear, as G‑d’s blessing was with them.

In the meantime, Ivan Stepanovich prepared his case against Zeide Eliezer.

Time seems to have a tendency to fly when you want it to go slowly, and indeed Zeide Eliezer’s court date approached rather quickly.

On the day before the trial, Stepanovich came to Zeide Eliezer’s house, a large sheaf of papers in his hand.

“I am in possession of a list of all your crimes, Jew Paltiel,” he said, waving the stack of papers in Zeide’s face. Then he thrust his package under his arm, puffed out his chest, put his hands on his hips and stood waiting for Zeide’s reaction.

Zeide Eliezer stood motionless for a moment, facing Stepanovich and considering what to reply to his accuser. It was clear to Zeide that this enemy of the Jews had a pogrom in mind, and would not be satisfied to simply forbid the addition of two rooms to a little wooden house. Then he replied calmly, “I hope His Excellency knows that the work my sons and I are doing in our house was started before the law was enacted. The law shouldn’t apply to renovations that were begun before there was a law. Should men be held responsible for committing crimes that were not crimes when they were done, and only later became illegal?”

While Zeide talked, Ivan Stepanovich’s face turned pink, then red, then deep crimson. His pulled himself up to his full five feet, and with his arms bent, hands grasping his waist, he looked as though he were about to dance a *kazatzka*. “Your end is near, Jew Paltiel!” His Excellency screeched. “I know your Talmud teaches you how to argue, but no argument will help you this time. You will pay! And not only a fine,” he wagged his finger ominously at Zeide. “You will lose your house and your business, too.” He waved the sheaf of papers tauntingly under Zeide Eliezer’s nose.

Bubbe Rochel Leah was standing in the kitchen peeling potatoes for soup, listening to the exchange between her husband and the village head, while tears streamed down her face, half-covered by the kerchief that sat low on her forehead. Her little son Berel, who was then two years old, was holding on to his mother’s skirt, his eyes raised to her tear-stained face. He didn’t understand why she was crying, nor did he understand his father’s conversation with the man wearing brass buttons on his long fancy coat, whose whiskers pointed to both sides of the village.

Berel’s sister, 11-year-old Manya, had gone with her friends to the train station to watch the trains come and go. Trains were a new phenomenon then, and therefore an interesting spectacle to all the area’s children. With the roar of its engine, its wheels screeching against iron rails, the Pochep-bound train pulled into the station.

Ivan Stepanovich stood on the platform, looking forward to Eliezer Paltiel’s trial the next day. This time, he felt certain he would be rid of the rich Jew once and for all. Afterward, the Jew’s guilt could easily be used to incite a pogrom that would begin first in his village and then spread to the surrounding villages.

Wanting to appear above others, His Excellency did not board the train when the less important passengers did. After the conductor called out, “All aboard, all aboard,” Stepanovich stood chatting with the stationmaster. Only when the train began to move, slowly at first, did he jump on the bottom step, expecting to take the successive steps and land neatly in the moving car. But his long coat with the brass buttons got caught in a spoke of an iron wheel that was rolling faster and faster on its rail.

Manya ran home out of breath, not knowing if she should feel sad that a fatal accident had occurred, or be glad that this man—this Haman, who she knew wanted to harm her father and all the area’s Jews—had been dragged by a moving wheel to his death under the train. She sprinted into the house screaming as loudly as she could, *“Er iz mer nit doh, er iz mer nit doh!”* (“He is no more, he is no more!”)

At Ivan Stepanovich’s funeral, his wife walked behind her husband’s coffin, wringing her hands and wailing, “I told you not to start up with the Jews. I told you to leave the Jew alone. You know their G‑d is powerful. You fool! You fool! You fool!”

The new village head did not follow Stepanovich’s example. He was an honest man who conducted himself with proper decorum and common sense, and he never bothered Zeide Eliezer. It was obvious to him that his predecessor had created a new law and then brought charges against Zeide Eliezer for no other reason than his eagerness to harm a Jew.

So, with the rebbe’s blessing, Zeide Eliezer and his sons added two rooms to their home, and the evil plot of Stepanovich was foiled.

*This true story was told to me by my father, Reb Berel Paltiel, the youngest son of Reb Eliezer and Rochel Leah Paltiel.*