**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Tetzaveh**

**And PURIM 5773**

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**Suzanne’s Legacy**

**By David Bibi**

 I want to tell you an amazing story I heard yesterday, but to do so, I need to give you a bit of background. Our dear friend Karen Rosenthal lost her mother this week, Suzanne Rosenthal - Shoshannah Mirriam bat Belle.

 Suzanne Rosenthal together with our friends the Modell family are founders of the original organization that became Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America.

**Stricken Just Before Her Wedding**

 In 1955, days before her wedding, she was stricken with terrible pains which were said to be everything from nerves and jitters, to overwork and exhaustion. At that time no one knew what it was. She had to delay her wedding, but fought through her illness and suffered without complaint, turning her own pain into a cause to help others.

 The CCFA notes that, “Suzanne was a fearless, determined and courageous woman who turned her diagnosis of Crohn’s disease in 1955 into a legacy that has gone on to help hundreds of thousands of people. She dedicated her life to spreading awareness about Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis, supporting and educating patients and funding research to find cures.

**Helped Found the Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America**

 In 1967, along with her husband, Irwin, Bill and Shelby Modell, and Dr. Henry D. Janowitz she founded the National Foundation of Ileitis and Colitis, now known as the Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America.

 “As a patient, volunteer and activist, Suzanne was a tireless pioneer for patients living with IBD and other digestive diseases. Her legacy continues through the many advocacy initiatives and patient support groups she established during her many years of service. She dedicated her life to helping other patients, and she is personally responsible for the creation of the various CCFA chapters nationwide. No words to truly express our gratitude to Suzanne and all she has done for the 1.4 million people suffering from these diseases.”

 Karen told us the following story.

**Karen’s Mom was in a Coma**

 Her mother was very ill and was going through surgeries and procedures at Mount Sinai. Thousands of emails were sent and people around the world were saying Tehilim. Karen was with her mom who was now in a coma. She thought that everyone else is praying. Now with a moment where everything seemed to stop, she too should pray.

 She went form the ICU on the 8th floor to the 6th floor where Bikur Cholim had a room. But when the elevator doors opened up, she thought she should just go back up and sit with her mother. She had no idea what would happen and she just wanted to be with her. So she pressed 8 and the doors started to close. But for some reason she put out her arm and stopped them. She stepped onto the sixth floor.

**Just Wanted to Get a Prayer**

 She thought, she wanted to just get the prayer book. She walked into the room and saw four women sitting in the room saying Tehilim – Psalms. She asked them if she could take a book and they say, please do, just return it when you can. They asked her mother’s Hebrew name and promised to pray for her.

 Karen leaves the room and starts walking towards the elevator but then turned back as if a magnet was pulling her towards the women. She began to panic. I have no idea what to say or even what page to turn to. I am lost. How can I help my mom? How can I fix this? What should I say?

**Asking Advice from the Other Women**

 She opened the door and with tears flowing she turns to the women and begs, “please tell me what to say that can help my mom.”

 And one woman in her sixties with a heavy accent responds, “What, G-d is off duty”?

 Karen turns back and explains that it doesn’t look very good. She has colitis, she had a blockage and combined with everything else it doesn’t look very good.

 The woman, turns back and asks, “Colitis, Crohns? I have Crohns, Do you know Dr. Present?” (He too was at the funeral) And Karen responded, yes, without telling her mother’s life story.

 The woman continued, “When I was pregnant with my 6th child in 1969 they had very little hope that I would be able to carry my daughter to term because I was diagnosed with Crohn’s. Dr. Present saved my life and my daughter’s life. And Dr. Present gave me a pamphlet and on the cover was a woman bent over in pain.

**Inspired by the Story of that Young Girl**

 “And there was a story of a young girl about to be married who became so ill that her wedding needed to be delayed. So the young chatan said that something needed to be done. He said if no one else is doing anything about the situation, then we will. And with friends they started the foundation that helped save my life. That story was so instrumental and meaningful to me. That story gave me the will to fight and the will to live. And today Baruch Hashem I have 16 children.”

 And Karen couldn’t control herself and blurted out to the woman, “that’s my mother and that’s my father that you read about.”

**Your Mother Gave Me the Will to Live**

 The woman responded, “You can’t understand. It was your mother who gave me the will to live. I thought that if she could do it, I could do it.”

 And the two hurried together to Suzanne’s room. And Karen repeated the story to her mother who perhaps could hear at that moment. And the woman turned to Suzanne and said to her in a loud voice, “Mrs’ Rosenthal, I want you to know that you saved my life. You saved my life.” And it was at that moment that the doctors told Karen that her mother’s battle on this earth was ending.

 The Rabbis teach us that the Shehina dwells over the head of an ill person and at that moment all could feel G-d in that room. Karen’s mother was gone, but the thousands she helped would live on after as a testament including the Satmar Bikur Cholim volunteer, her 16 children and dozens and dozens of grandchildren.

 We say to a mourner, “from Heaven may you be comforted”. At that moment, Heaven came down to earth. In memory of Shoshannah Mirriam bat Belle, Tehe Nafsha Serurah BeSror HaChayim.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*

**Heroes of Olde: The**

**Shpoler Zeide’s Purim Play**

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| “Wait, Mendel,” the rebbe said. “How will you know who your lawyer is?” |

 Once a Jew named Mendel came to the *tzaddik* Reb Aryeh Leib of Shpola, asking for help. At a glance, the rebbe could see that he was terribly upset.

 “Rebbe, I don’t know what to do!” the man said. “A year ago I left my home in Rumania to come to Russia, together with my wife and family. We hoped to get a new start in life, but we’ve had no luck. “In addition to all the expenses of moving, which I don’t know how I’ll pay, I have now received official papers demanding that I appear in court on charges of stealing money from the government.”

**Insists to Not Having Done Anything Wrong**

 “Believe me, Rebbe, I never touched a penny that wasn’t mine in my whole life. I don’t know what it’s all about. Rebbe! What am I to do?”

 “Don’t be worried,” said Reb Aryeh Leib, trying to calm him down. “Tell me, where is the trial to take place?”

 “Here in Russia,” Mendel replied. “They wanted to take me back to Rumania, but the Russian government protected me.”

 “Good. It’s best to be on your own ground. Is there a date for the trial?”

 “Yes, it’s scheduled for ——.”

**Make Sure That the Trial**

**Takes Place on Purim Day**

 “Have it changed,” the rebbe said sharply. “Do everything in your power to make sure the trial takes place on Purim day! Do you have a lawyer?”

 “No, Rebbe. Not yet!”

 The rebbe paused for a moment and then said, “Mendel, I’ll make you a deal. I know a certain girl who is soon to get married. The poor girl is an orphan, with no father or mother to help her. I am trying to do what I can. She still needs 300 rubles for the wedding. If you get me the money for her, I will get you a good lawyer.”

 Mendel was overjoyed. 300 rubles was a lot of money, but Mendel immediately handed the sum to the rebbe. Filled with good hope, he turned to go.

**The Lawyer Will Have a**

**White Hat and Red Gloves**

 “Wait, Mendel. How will you know who your lawyer is?” said the rebbe. Mendel gazed at the rebbe without speaking. “Listen, don’t worry. He will meet you in the courtroom on Purim day. You will be able to recognize him by his white hat and red gloves. Is that a good enough sign?”

 Mendel smiled gratefully. “Thank you, Rebbe,” he said.

 Mendel returned home and immediately began carrying out the rebbe’s instructions. He began going to the offices of the court, filing papers and speaking to officials in order to have the date of the trial changed. At first he met with no success. Refusing to take no for an answer, he kept on trying, until at last he succeeded. The trial was set for Purim day.

**A Second Gift of Money for the Needy**

 Shortly before the trial, Mendel sent a letter to the rebbe enclosing more money to be distributed to the needy on Purim, and asking for the rebbe’s blessing.

 Finally, the day of the trial arrived. In the Shpoler Zeide’s shul, everyone was in an excited Purim mood.

 Following his yearly custom, Reb Aryeh Leib prepared to make his Purim play. He gave instructions to his students and to the people of the town who would be the actors, but no one really knew what the play was about.

 One of the townsfolk was instructed to play the part of a Jew named Mendel. Another was to be Mendel’s old friend who had turned against him, and was in fact the chief witness for the prosecution.

 The judge was to be played by the rabbi of the town. The prosecutor, who was trying to prove Mendel’s guilt, was told to cover his face with black paint. The Shpoler Zeide himself dressed up as Mendel’s lawyer. He put a white scarf around his fur *shtreimel*, and wore red gloves.

 The trial began. First the “chief justice” read the charges. Then the “prosecutor” with the black face tried to tell the court what a terrible person “Mendel” was, a hardened criminal and a thief. However, all the townsfolk watching the play kept interrupting him and laughing at everything he said.

 Next, “Mendel’s former friend” took the stand. He told the court that the true reason “Mendel” had moved to Russia was in order to run away from the law. He had found a chest of golden coins belonging to the government of Rumania, and now he was trying to make off with the money.

**Mendel’s Two Witnesses Take the Stand**

 Then two “witnesses on Mendel’s side” were called to take the stand. They testified just the opposite. They told the court how they had seen the “friend” demanding a huge sum of money from Mendel. When Mendel refused to give him the money, the “friend” threatened to make big trouble.

 Finally, the Shpoler Zeide, dressed up as Mendel’s lawyer, made his speech. He showed how the whole case was based on a lie, made up by the wicked “friend.” He proved that there never was a chest of gold; and even if there had been one, and Mendel had found it, the Rumanian government could not legally claim a penny. Everyone was spellbound, and hung on to his every word.

 At last came the verdict. The “judge,” who was the rabbi of the town, declared Mendel innocent. Mendel’s wicked “friend” was reproached and sent off in shame. The “prosecutor” with the black face was grabbed and pushed out of court, and told to go wash his face.

**Sat Down to a Festive Meal**

 Then the Shpoler Zeide and all his followers sat down to their festive Purim meal. In the middle of their rejoicing, a message from the real Mendel arrived. The trial had gone splendidly! He was free! He would return to Shpola at once.

 A few days later, Mendel showed up and told everyone about the trial and his wonderful lawyer. People opened their eyes in disbelief. It was exactly what had happened in the Shpoler Zeide’s Purim play!

 Mendel could not wait to see the *tzaddik*. “Thank you, Rebbe,” he said. “You sent me an amazing lawyer. Everyone said they had never heard anyone like him before! Most important of all, here I am. Free! He saved my life!”

 “I am so glad to hear it,” said the rebbe. “Do you by any chance know who that lawyer was?”

 “No, Rebbe,” Mendel replied.

 “So I will tell you. He was a holy angel from heaven, created by the charity you gave to help that orphan girl get married.

 “If you are lucky, you may see him again. After 120 years, when you will be summoned to G‑d’s court in heaven to account for what you did in this world, he may come again to be your lawyer and to speak in your defense!”

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**Yanush’s Lechaim**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

 The scene is some two hundred years ago in the large Chassidic Shul (Synagogue) of the Holy Rabbi Yisroel of Ruzin. The Chassidim were preparing for their morning prayers when a stranger burst in franticly, grabbed the first man he encountered and whispered short of breath from running, "D-d-d… did they pray yet? Are they finished?"

 Before the Chassid could answer, the stranger wiped the sweat from his brow and continued, "I have YorTzite for my father! YorTzite today!! Did they davin (pray) yet??"

 (Yor Tzite means the exact date that a loved one passed away. That day is very important in Judaism, especially for the passing of a parent, and a special prayer called 'Kaddish' is said)

 A few of the other Chassidim approached the man and calmed him down. The fellow didn't have a covering on his head and clearly was not religious at all, he, and it was obvious that he would never have stepped foot in the place if not for his conscience bothering him.

 He said his name was Yanush and he didn't believe in any of the Torah but he wanted to say Kaddish for his father who had been a religious man. Someone put a Yarmulke on Yanush's head. Someone else approached him with Tefillin (phylacteries) which he tried to refuse, unsuccessfully. Then someone brought him a prayer book and showed him where the 'Kaddish' prayer was, another draped a prayer shawl (Talit) on his shoulders and the prayers began.

 At first he just wanted to forget the whole crazy thing and leave but something kept him there, maybe it was guilt or some other psychological thing, but on the other hand, maybe it was the soul of his father.

 The Chassidim were patient with him and waited silently at each of his bumbling, time consuming attempts to say the Kaddish prayer. But finally, when the services were over he removed the Tefillin and Tallit said 'Thank you' and started for the door. But they stopped him.

 "Hey!" they exclaimed, "You have to buy 'Kibbud'!!" (lit. 'Honor' i.e. cakes, liquor etc. to give 'honor' to the departed).

 Poor Yanush was stuck, he had no choice but to agree. He was planning to give a donation anyway but the place made him uneasy, it was too Jewish. "I'll just buy this stuff and get out of here." He comforted himself.

 Someone ran to the store and returned just moments later with all the delicacies Yanush paid him back and turned to the exit.

 "No, NO!!" they all cried out. Someone grabbed his arm and another led him to the tables they had pushed together. "You must stay! For the sake of your father at least make a 'LeChiam.'" They pulled up chairs, sat down around the table and forced Yanush to sit with them.

 But Yanush had had enough. He wanted out and he wanted it NOW! He angrily pushed his seat back and abruptly stood up. Suddenly the door of the Rebbe's study opened, a hush fell over the room and everyone stood at attention. It was the holy Rebbe of Ruzin in person! Even Yanush was surprised. He'd never imagined a human being could be so…. so real and holy!

 "Why the commotion?" The Rebbe motioned with his hand.

 No one answered they were paralyzed with awe.

 "Ahh! Kibbud!" Said the Rebbe as he glanced at the food on the table. "Yor-Tzite for your father?" He looked Yanush deeply in the eyes.

 The Rebbe pulled up a seat, sat at the table, and motioned for them all to follow.

 "Here" Said the Rebbe as he filled a small shot glass with vodka and offered it to Yanush who was just sitting down.. "Make a blessing and say 'LeChiam'! (lit. To life)"

 Yanush looked around, all eyes were on him. The surprise was wearing off, 'what am I doing here?' he thought to himself. 'This is insane and I'm leaving'. He reached out, took the glass, looked around again briefly and with a smirk on his face, silently tilted his head back, opened his mouth and downed the vodka in one gulp.

 "LeChiam U'L'movet!!" (To life and to death!) he said loudly as he looked challengingly at the Chassidim, the vodka began taking effect and his smile widened.

 "Oy Oy!" yelled the Rebbe holding his head in his hands! "Oy! What have you done to your father?! What have you done!!?"

 This unexpected outburst sobered Yanush up, the Rebbe was really serious. He again looked Yanush deeply in the eyes. "What have you done!!?” Yanush started to really feel afraid, although he didn’t know of what.

 "Listen to me my friend! I knew your father. His name was Shlomo, right? Well, when he died several years ago his soul rose to the heavenly court and stood trial. It was decided that because he had a bad son like you and it was partially his fault he had return to this world; a gilgul (reincarnation).

 "His soul descended and was incarnated in a grain of wheat. Yes, a grain of wheat. That grain waited in the field until it was finally harvested. Then it was bundled and shipped to a large distillery where it was put in a huge vat until it fermented. Then it was distilled, aged, bottled and finally distributed.

 "That bottle found its way to our local grocery store and finally this morning it was purchased and is now sitting here on our table before us.

 "Yanush! Your father's soul was in that glass of vodka I just gave you. If you would have just made that blessing you would have rectified it. But you didn't. You wrecked the entire process! What have you done to your father?!"

 Yanush's head was spinning. The story was ridiculous, insane, crazy but when the Rebbe told it, it was clearly true.

 He sat speechless, his eyes filled with tears and he began trembling uncontrollably. "What can I do? Is there any way to…?" he whispered.

 "Yes" answered the Rebbe. "But it means changing your life to become the Jew your father wants you to be." Yanush just nodded in agreement.

*Reprinted from last week’s email on the parsha from Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**The Yizkor Club**

**By** [**Sarah Fineman**](http://www.aish.com/search/?author=190830181)

 Entering this mysterious, exclusive club provided a surprising connection to my mother.

 Mommy wasn’t from an observant background. She couldn’t read from a *siddur* but she rarely missed going to synagogue on Shabbat, and certainly never missed going on a holiday. I often stood by her side as she prayed. She learned to recite one or two of the prayers in Hebrew but mostly she prayed in English.

 Mommy often cried when she prayed. Sometimes the tears seemed spontaneous and I wondered what it was that made her cry. Other times it was predictable; She cried at every Hallel while she sang King David’s words, “From the straits I call out to God…”

 Each time the cantor reached those words I inevitably looked up at her to see if this time she could make it through the two lines without crying. She never did. Each time I watched the tears slowly slide down the sides of her face and drop onto her prayer book. I knew that Mommy was calling out from her own straits, whatever they were.

 There was another point in the holiday services that she would always cry. Those tears I never saw. I was never once at her side when she cried them. Those were the tears she cried during the [Yizkor](http://www.aish.com/sp/pr/The_Meaning_of_Kaddish.html) Club.

 The Yizkor Club meets several times a year, on Yom Kippur, Shmini Atzeret, Passover, and Shavuot. They meet in every synagogue, in the middle of the prayer service, and everyone who is not a member of the club is asked to leave and invited back only when the Yizkor Club is through. Outside the doors, I would hear nothing. The Yizkor Club meets in silence.

 After the Yizkor Club was finished, I would dutifully return to my seat to find Mommy, her eyes a little watery, her nose a little red, and her cheeks a little damp. It was obvious she had been crying.

 It isn’t actually called the Yizkor Club. But as a child I had always thought of it that way. It was something exclusive, something that Mommy was a part of but I wasn’t. It wasn’t until I got older that I realized the Yizkor Club is a “club” that no one wants to join. Its members have all experienced the death of a loved one. They all have a gaping hole in their heart.

 Mommy had been a member of the Yizkor Club since before I was born. She became a member when her father, Poppy Boy as he was lovingly called by his grandchildren, died. Mommy kept Poppy Boy’s memory alive through pictures and stories, her words painting vivid illustrations of his life. I always felt that I had known him, even though we never met.

 When she spoke about his strong hands, I could almost feel his long fingers curled around my little hand, squeezing just a bit too tight. When she described how dignified he was, I could almost hear his charming English accent.

 It seemed that everything about Poppy Boy was special, including his [*yahrtzeit*](http://www.aish.com/sp/so/48950351.html), the day he died. It's the same day as Moses', the seventh day of the month of Adar. Mommy pointed this out to me on more than one occasion. And so, on that day, the seventh of Adar, Mommy would light a [*yizkor*](http://www.aish.com/sp/so/My-11-Months-of-Kaddish.html) candle in her father’s memory. In all of my years watching Mommy light that candle, it never once occurred to me that I might be doing the same for her on that same day.

 Thirty-three years after Poppy Boy died, on the [seventh of Adar](http://www.aish.com/dijh/Adar_7.html), I got the call from my father telling me that Mommy only had minutes left. Mommy, who cradled me, fed me, sang to me, and wiped away my tears. Mommy, who laughed with me, danced with me, played with me, helped me with my homework.

 Mommy, who listened to my stories, listened to my heartache, walked me down the aisle, and watched me begin my own journey of motherhood. Mommy, the woman to whom I owed my very existence, the woman who was always there. Only minutes left and I was over an hour away away.

 And then, just minutes later, I was told it was over. She was gone. I lost my friend, my role model, my teacher, and my advocate in one instant. Suddenly I was transformed from a grown woman to a little, broken orphan girl. I just wanted my Mommy.

 I can’t begin to describe the swelling pain, the emptiness and longing I felt for Mommy the very first time I walked through the doors of [Yizkor Club](http://www.aish.com/sp/so/A_Member_of_the_Club.html). The club for the broken hearted, for orphans, widows, people who lost a brother or sister, or worst of all buried a child. The club that no one wants to join. Armed with my prayer book and a wad of tissues I stepped into the room.

 At that moment, I found a new understanding of Mommy. I understood the tears that Mommy cried. I felt the emptiness and the loneliness she must have felt. I prayed, no, pleaded for God to remember Mommy for the good, the way she must have prayed for her parents. But there was something more. There was also a tremendous comfort that I never expected to find behind the doors of the Yizkor Club.

 Without uttering a single word, it was clear that everyone in that room was bound by something so deep, so real. We all experienced the impact of a loss and therefore can appreciate life in a way that others cannot. We don’t simply know that we are mortal, we feel it. We understand just how precious every moment, every opportunity, every relationship, and every *mitzvah* is.

 During *yizkor*, we not only pray for our departed loved ones, but we vow to give charity in their merit, thus elevating their souls to loftier levels. This vow is serious and after the holiday is over, the charity is given without delay. Mommy can no longer do *mitzvot* and raise up her own soul, but I can do it for her. So my relationship with Mommy is not over; it is different.

 Now I stand in her place in the Yizkor Club, and continue a legacy of honoring the unforgotten souls of our family. I cry for losing something irreplaceable and my prayers float through the gates of heaven, each time, upon fresh tears. I ache for Mommy and at the same time find comfort in the fact that even death can not separate us, for our souls are forever connected.

*L'ilui nishmas Chaya Dena bas Avraham Yaakov*

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

**The Hafess Hayyim**

**And the Espionage Case**

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**The Hafess Hayyim (Chofetz Chaim)**

 the Hafess Hayyim's (Chofetz Chaim’s) yeshivah in Radin, Russia. The trial was conducted before the military court in the city of Vitebsk.

 Efrayim was accused of spying on behalf of the German enemy during wartime. As evidence, the architectural plans of the fortresses of Kovno, which were hidden in the boy's pocket by a Russian provocateur, were presented to the court.

 Three general sat as judges to oversee the hearings. The Hafess Hayyim had issued messages to all the yeshivot that they should pray and recite Tehillim on behalf of the innocent defendant, and in his own yeshivah the Hafess Hayyim declared a fast day. He himself traveled to Vitebsk to testify on the boy's behalf.

 The defense attorney, Kapitan Zebyanik, explained to the judges who stood before them. He told them of the individual who turned to the Hafess Hayyim on a street in Warsaw and asked him for change a five-ruble bill. Just as the ssadik took out his wallet to grant the man's request, the man grabbed the wallet and ran.

 As he ran, the Hafess Hayyim's voice ran after him, informing him that he forgave the thief completely. His escorts wanted to chase after the thief, but the Hafess Hayyim restrained them, saying:

 "There can be no doubt that hunger and poverty brought him to such a state of desperation, and it is a missvah to help him. I have no doubt that when he returns to his senses he will feel very bad about what he did. Why should he eat stolen goods? Better that he use the money lawfully".

 The generals heard the story in utter disbelief. The head of the court turned to the defense lawyer and asked, "Counsel, do you yourself really believe such a story?"

 The lawyer responded, "No, Sir. In my mind, this is just legend."

 The judge asked in bewilderment, "Then what are you trying to prove from an improbable legend?"

 The lawyer replied, "Forgive me, your honor, but perhaps you can tell me why no such stories are told about you or me. Don't you think that the very emergence of these stories specifically regarding one person constitutes infallible confirmation of his credentials and stature?"

 After this introduction, the Hafess Hayyim stood up on the witness stand to testify: "There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the defendant is perfectly innocent, and the accusation results from an intentional attempt to frame him."

 "Is the rabbi prepared to swear to that effect?" he was asked. The Hafess Hayyim responded, "I have never taken an oath in my life, even in telling the truth; but in all my life, I never uttered anything false."

 The absolute, confident declaration amazed the judges even more than the remarkable story!

*Reprinted from the archives of the Aram Soba Foundation Newsletter.*

**Good Shabbos Everyone**

*The following true story from about 200 years ago illustrates the generous quality of the Jewish people...*

**The Blind Man and**

**His Son Shlomo**

**By Rabbi Yechiel Spero**

 Most people just turned the other way when they saw a blind old man walking into town, led by his young son. The two looked poor, hungry and needy, especially on this damp and chilly day. No one seemed interested in helping them; the townspeople wanted to just get home, sit by their fires and eat a warm meal.

 As Reb Yankel watched the father and son trudging through the town square, he took an immediate interest in them, approached and asked if they would be interested in a warm meal. The old man declined the offer, insisting that he would be just fine eating at the local inn that, he assumed, offered free meals to the poor; the young boy, however, eagerly accepted the kindness.

 The father seemed irritated by the fact that his son's hunger had overridden other consideration; nevertheless, they followed their kind host to his home. As they walked, Yankel tried to make small talk, asking where they came from and about the rest of the family.

 The boy, whose name was Shlomo, gladly held up his side of the conversation, but the old man repeatedly tried to hush him. The child revealed that his mother had died years before and that he and his father were alone. He added that since his father was blind they had very little resources and had not eaten a good meal in a long while. They had almost no money and were very thankful that someone had taken the time to care for their needs.

 Yankel would, under normal circumstances, have asked the boy what he Torah was learning, but it went without saying that the boy did not have much of an opportunity to learn anything. He was fully occupied in taking care of his father.

 They arrived at their host's home and sat down to eat the meal. Not having eaten in quite a while, the two ate heartily and listened as their host spoke; he had an offer for them and it was almost too good to be true — he would allow them to stay as guests in his home, he would provide them with food and, in addition, Yankel wanted to hire an excellent melamed for the young Shlomo. It would seem that there was very little to discuss; how could they possibly turn down such an offer?

 But that did not stop the boy's father from expressing his disinterest. Although he was offered three delicious meals a day and the very best education for his son, he still hesitated out of pride.

 However, Shlomo's reaction was a different story; his eyes lit up at the offer. Hope for a better life, one where he would have a chance to be just like everyone else, was right there at his fingertips and he desperately wanted it.

 The father finally agreed and their new life began. Day after day Yankel catered to the needs of his guests and accommodated every request the man made. Shlomo flourished in the new environment, his thirst for learning and unquenchable desire for Torah growing daily.

 The boy's phenomenal memory allowed him to connect various pieces of Gemara that most boys his age could never begin to do. His comprehension, mature beyond his years, coupled with his diligence, allowed him to grow in his learning at a phenomenal pace. The middos Shlomo had cultivated by caring for his elderly father blossomed even further, and before long he became an outstanding talmid chacham as well as a young man of sterling character.

 A few years later the father, to whom the boy had devoted so much of his life, passed away. The young Shlomo now channeled all of his energies into his learning. Without any distractions, nothing could stop his growth. Yankel was not just any Yankel. He was Rav Yaakov Kranz, better known as the greatest maggid ever, the Dubner Maggid (1740-1804). And the young boy also was not just anybody. His reputation grew, eventually he married and became the great Rav of Brod, Rav Shlomo Kluger (1785-1869)!

 The Chofetz Chaim would retell this story to convey the importance of uncovering the hidden treasures that lie within our very own children. Often circumstances prevent them from becoming who they are destined to be. But with a much needed break and an offer from a kind stranger they can rid themselves of the shackles that chain them down and have the freedom to chase their dreams.(from Touched by Story 4, p. 82, Rabbi Yechiel Spiro) By doing Chesed - acts of kindness and giving to others, there is no limit to what we can help others accomplish in life.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Good Shabbos Everyone.*

**Love of the Land**

**Unraveling Strings Attached**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Zt”l**

 One of the greatest builders of Torah education in Eretz Yisrael in the previous generation was Rabbi Yosef Kahaneman, commonly known as the Rav of Ponovez. Arriving in the Holy Land after losing most of his family and community in the Holocaust, he not only founded the great yeshiva in Bnei Brak which bears the name of the community which he led back in Lithuania but also institutions to care for homeless children who had survived the war.

 He was not only a brilliant Torah scholar and orator but also an extremely effective fundraiser. One particular donor was enamored of this great man’s personality but did not particularly care for the religious nature of his institutions.

 “I am prepared to give you the money you need to build another school, he told the rav, “but only if none of its students wear a *kipah* on his head!” Not missing a beat the rav agreed to this condition and received the gift.

 What did he do? He built a school for girls in which not one student kept her head covered.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of ORHNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet in Yerushalayim.*

**The Human Side of the Story**

**Lost and Found**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Zt”l**

 “Where is Chaim?” was the anguished cry of the Jerusalem mother whose three-year old son was nowhere to be seen.

 Neighbors were soon organized into search parties and there was talk of alerting the police and the ZAKA volunteers who specialize in locating lost people.

 Then someone reminded the searchers, who had already spent a futile hour, that Jerusalem, with its large population of infants, had a “*Gemach* for Lost Children” in virtually every religious neighborhood.

 An Orthodox Telephone Directory was consulted and a call was made to the nearest home that offered this unique service.

 “Does your little boy answer to the name Chaim?” was the question coming from the end of the line. “Someone found him crying in the street and brought him here.”

 Thus there was a happy ending to yet another story of a lost child thanks to a very special *Gemach*.

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

**Chassidic Story #795**

**It is Purim Today – L’Chaim!**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/8?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000pPG0:001H996100000P11&block=1&msgNature=all&msgStatus=all&count=1361371314&randid=1698358062&content=central##)

 Purim had arrived, and a poverty-stricken Jew who lived in a village on the outskirts of the town of Koznitz lacked the means to purchase the basic necessities for the festive Purim feast held on the afternoon of the holiday. He felt terrible about it, especially for his wife and children--that such a happy day should turn into a depressing one with no celebration to look forward to.

 “Oh, well,” he thought to himself; “at least I should do the mitzvah of hearing the Megillah in the best possible manner. Of the four special mitzvot of the day - hearing Megillat Esther, giving money and gifts to the poor, sending portions (mishloach manot) of food and drink to friends, enjoying a Purim feast”it is the only one that does not cost any money. I’ll walk to town early in the morning and hear the Reading from the Rebbe himself!”

 The Rebbe was **Rabbi Yisrael** [named for the Baal Shem Tov because of his miraculous birth, but that’s a different story for another time -editor], the famous Maggid (preacher) of **Koznitz**. The Maggid did not appoint a reader from among the knowledgeable members of the congregation, preferring to read it aloud himself from a scroll for the benefit of all assembled.

 The villager, although by no means a scholar, found this special reading to be inspiring. Despite his untenable financial situation, he began to be filled with the unique joy and good feelings of the Purim festival. But then, after the Reading, everyone lined up to pass by the Rebbe and exchange individual holiday greetings with him.

 When our villager approached, the Maggid said to him, “Aren’t you from the village just outside town? Well, then, why did you not bring me Mishloach Manot, as is traditional?”

 The poor man’s newly acquired good spirits crashed. He stood, mouth agape, in stunned silence. He couldn’t even afford a half loaf of bread for his children; how was he supposed to bring the Rebbe a present, even if that was what everyone else on the line was doing?

 “Alright, my friend,” smiled the Rebbe, “donâ’t be sad. It is Purim today, after all. Everyone is invited to my house; come join us for a bite and a bit of whisky.”

 He didn’t have to be invited twice, especially for the l’chaim part. As he cheerfully toasted two or three times, his cheerful Purim mood was quickly restored. [He lifted some spirits to lift his spirits! -editor.] Another cup or two and he was seized with a clever idea, as well as the chutzpah (nerve) to put it into action.

 He excused himself from the table, and off he went to the nearby house of a wealthy wine merchant. When the man opened his door, the villager saluted him with an enthusiastic “Happy Purim, my dear fellow Jew!” Then he followed with “Please give me a nice bottle of wine on credit. Of course I’ll pay you back. But if Heaven forbid it should happen that I don’t, well, it’s Purim today, isn’t it? Merry Purim! L’chaim!”

 The astounded merchant gave him a bottle with a shrug, a big smile and a “Happy Purim!” of his own. Our man, pleased with his success, went on with a bit more confidence to the fruit and vegetable store.

 “Merry Purim, friend! Please give me a few juicy red apples on credit. Of course I’ll pay you back. But if Heaven forbid it should happen that I don’t, well, it’s Purim today, isn’t it? Happy Purim!” The F&V man also became caught up in the visitor’s enthusiasm and good cheer, and presented him with two large apples.

 The villager ran as fast as he could back to the Maggid’s house, and with a grin of satisfaction presented him with the wine and apples. “Happy Purim, holy rebbe, and L’Chaim! Here is Mishloach Manot for you from me.

 “Well done!” responded the Maggid. “You should remember every Purim to bring me Mishloach manot.”

 Thrilled with his good fortune in obtaining Mishloach Manot for the Rebbe, the Jew decided to push his luck further. “My poor family is sitting alone at home, starving. They have no Purim joy at all. Let’s see if I can take care of them too.”

 He strode over to the local liquor vendor and tried his same formula again. “Happy Purim, my brother! Please give me a bottle for l’chaim, on credit. Of course I’ll pay you back. But if Heaven forbid it should happen that I don’t, well, it’s Purim today, isn’t it? Merry Purim! And l’chaim!”
 The owner laughed and gave him a bottle of plum brandy. This, in turn, inspired the flushed visitor to continue on to the bakery. “Happy Purim, friend! Please give me a large braided loaf on credit. Of course I’ll pay you back. But if Heaven forbid it should happen that I don’t, well, it’s Purim today, isn’t it? Merry Purim!”

 It worked. Now all he needed was a main dish. He decided to try the nearby grocery store. “Happy Purim, friend! Please give me some delicious fat herring on credit. Of course I’ll pay you back. But if Heaven forbid it should happen that I don’t, well, it’s Purim today, isn’t it? Merry Purim!” The grocer cheerfully obliged, and the Jew set out for home with both hands filled with goodies. Arriving just at the traditional hour for the meal, he burst in the door, proclaiming loudly, “It’s Purim today, it’s Purim today. Happy Purim, dear family. L’chaim!”

 His wife and children never expected to see him in such a joyful, excited mood. They couldn’t imagine what had happened to him and worried greatly-- had he flipped out, lost his mind from the desperation of poverty on Purim Day?

 He, however, was oblivious to the obvious concern on their faces, and continued his cheerful patter. Then he set out on the table the bread, fish and liquor that he had acquired, and told them to sit, and eat, drink, feel good and be merry; it’s Purim today! Happy Purim. L’chaim!â”

 Whatever had happened, they weren’t about to refuse this enticing invitation. They set to with gusto as he sat down and joined them. After a few sips of L’chaim they too began to happily enter the spirit of the day, and soon they all jumped up and started dancing around the table, holding hands and singing loudly “Purim today! Purim today!”

 Round and round they went on in this vein for quite a while, until suddenly they heard knocking at their door. “Don’t open,” he instructed his wife. It is probably someone ignorant of Purim that wants to ruin our celebration.”

 But the knocking didn’t stop. Finally, his wife said to him, “I think I know who is there. It’s that elderly non-Jew who lives near the forest and regularly comes around to sell us potatoes from his garden. I am going to open the door for him.”

 She did so and indeed it was him, but he was bruised and bleeding and appeared seriously injured. They quickly administered to him and washed and dressed his wounds as best they could, then gave him some of their food and a cup of the brandy [and perhaps said to him, “L’chaim and a Happy Purim” - editor.].

 After he ate and drank, he thanked them: “You restored me to life! I was a moment away from death out there.” He went on to explain to them what had happened.

 “My only son did this to me! He wanted me to advance him a large sum from his eventual inheritance, and when I refused to do so he beat me nearly to death and then threw me out into the freezing cold. I couldn’t find anyone to help me except you.

 “And since my son has turned out to be a cruel murderer and ingrate, I will never let him get his hands on any of my money. And since you were the only ones who cared enough to help me, I will show you where I have my fortune hidden in the forest. It is likely I will die soon from these injuries, and if I do, you can take the money as a present in gratitude for your kindness.”

 The Jew accompanied him into the forest and noted the tree under which the injured man said he buried his wealth. A few days later the man did indeed die as a result of the vicious beating. The week after that the Jew went into the forest and dug up the strong-box. It turned out to contain a small fortune and he was now, suddenly, a rich man.

 The next Purim he returned to Koznitz and presented the Maggid with a large basket filled with expensive items of food and drink, and a generous monetary donation as well.

 And so he did every Purim after that too. L’chaim and Happy Pourem!

 [Source: Translated and adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Sipurei Chasidim-Moadim by Rabbi S. Y. Zevin, and expanded based on respected oral sources. DO NOT reprint or publish in any form without written permission from <[editor@ascentofsafed.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/8?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000pPG0:001H996100000P11&block=1&msgNature=all&msgStatus=all&count=1361371314&randid=1698358062&content=central##)>. Yes, you can pass the email along.]

 Biographical note: **Rabbi Yisrael Haupstein**, 1737- 14 Tishrei 1814, **'the Maggid' of Koznitz**, a major disciple of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech, and author of the chassidic-kabbalistic work, 'Avodas Yisrael' and other books. His miraculous birth is the subject of a popular Baal Shem Tov story.

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