**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Beha’aloscha 5773**

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**As Netanyahu Tours [Shanghai] Museum with His Wife Sara, His**

**Son Steals into Synagogue to Pray**

**By Herb Keinon**



*Avner Netanyahu and Rabbi Abraham Greenberg in Shanghai, China*

SHANGHAI- As a Chabad emissary in Shanghai, Rabbi Abraham Greenberg has abundant experience putting tefillin on other people. But even Greenberg was surprised when Avner Netanyahu, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu’s youngest son, approached him during his father’s tour of the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum and asked if he had a pair of tefillin on Tuesday.

The younger Netanyahu, a 12th-grader in Jerusalem, told the rabbi that he did not have time in the morning to pray, and asked if he had any tefillin handy. Greenberg did.

**Avner Went into the Small**

**Ohel Moshe Synagogue**

So as his father and mother were touring the museum that tells the tale of some 18,000 Jewish refugees from Europe who found shelter in the city during the Holocaust, as a Chinese woman was playing a languid tune on a violin in an atrium and as the press and invited guests were milling around, Avner went into the small Ohel Moshe synagogue that makes up part of the museum complex and put on tefillin.

The word “synagogue” in this context is a bit of a misnomer.

The structure, built in 1927 by Iraqi Jews who predated the influx of refugees from Europe, once did serve the Jews in Shanghai as a central place of worship, but has since been restored not as a living, breathing synagogue, but rather as a museum.

There is a bima (podium), an ark and even a purple ark cover – donated by Israel’s Consulate General in the city – inscribed with the words “Tribute to the Hongkou People who provided refuge to Jews in time of need.”

**No Torah Inside the Ark**

But there is no Torah inside the ark. The Chinese government, apparently, is not interested in turning the site – located in the city’s Hongkou district – into an active synagogue, but rather wants to preserve it as a historic site and keep it as a museum.

There are, however, three Chabad houses in the city that do serve as synagogues. One of those Chabad houses provided the Netanyahu entourage with kosher food during the prime minister’s two-night stay in Shanghai, a city not blessed with an abundance of kosher eateries.

Since Ohel Moshe does not function on a regular basis as a synagogue, Avner did not find a prayer book there. Instead, he pulled out his cellular phone and called up a prayer book on his phone.

As cameras clicked, the younger Netanyahu prayed, covering his eyes during recitation of the Shema, and taking three steps backward and then forward for the Amida, seemingly oblivious to those watching him.

Among those looking on was a Chinese official, intrigued by what the young Netanyahu was doing. After Netanyahu finished, the man approached him and politely asked what he had just wrapped around his arm. Avner, who regularly wears a knitted kippa, briefly explained in English the morning ritual, and ended by saying, “It reminds us daily of Who we stand before.”

*Reprinted from last week’s email of the AJOP (Association of Jewish Outreach Programs) Update. The article was originally published in the May 7, 2013 edition of The Jerusalem Post.*

**The Baal Shem Tov’s Prescription for a**

**Gunshot Wound**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

Here is a story from the Baal Shem Tov (Besh't for short) (who passed away on the holiday of Shavuot, over 250 years ago).

The Besh't once gave one of his Chassidim, Rav Nisan, a closed envelope and ordered him to travel to the Castle of the local ruler, Count Radzvill, and do everything possible to interest the Count's friend and drinking and hunting companion, Pierre Louis, to return to Judaism. The envelope was to be opened in two days time.

**Perplexed about Pierre Louis’s Jewishness**

Rav Nisan was perplexed. He had heard of this Pierre Louis and as far as everyone knew, he definitely was not Jewish…... What did the Besh’t mean ‘return’ to Judaism?

But the Baal Shem was never wrong. He often did miracles to reveal the purpose of creation, the value of every human and especially the uniqueness of the Jews. So Rav Nissan was only too happy to follow orders. He went in for last minute instructions and was on his way.

Count Radzvill was fabulously wealthy man with castles and villas throughout Europe where he spent most of his time enjoying life; traveling, partying and hunting. Years ago when in France he met a nobleman by the name of Pierre Louis and since then they were almost inseparable. Today they were returning to the Count's Russian palace after an absence of several months and all his serfs and servants were gathered before his castle to welcome him.

The joy was great. Unlike most of the Russian nobility Count Radzvill was a kind and just man and everyone was happy to see him back. Our Chassid, Rav Nissan, arrived just as the Count and his friend stepped out of their carriage, but as hard as he tried and from whichever angle he looked Pierre Louis certainly did not look in any way Jewish.

**Seemingly No Way to Enter the Castle**

After the two had entered the Castle and the crowd had dispersed, Rav Nissan hung around the grounds for the rest of the day wondering what to do and at nightfall he still had no clue. Things looked bad; he had absolutely no way of entering the Castle and even if he did his chances of meeting Pierre Louis were zero and of actually speaking to him were less.

That night he slept in the town Synagogue and the next day he returned to the Castle hoping something would materialize. But as he approached he immediately noticed that something was wrong. There was again a large crowd gathered there, but they were unusually solemn, some of the Jews were reading Psalms and others were crying. He asked around until he got the entire picture.

It seems that shortly after the Count and his friend settled in at the Castle they couldn't resist the idea that the surrounding woods were probably filled with game. So despite their fatigue from the journey they went hunting.

**A Tragic Accident Occurs**

The hunt was successful but when they returned toward evening, tired and laden with prey, a tragic accident occurred; the fatigued Count tripped on one of the Castle steps, his pistol discharged and he was left with a large bleeding wound in his chest.

His friend Pierre Louis immediately had him moved into the Castle and sent tens of carriages in all directions to bring help from nearby cities. All night carriages returned with different doctors and professors but despite all their expertise and efforts they weren't able to stop the bleeding. The Count was dying.

Suddenly Rav Nissan remembered the envelope the Rebbe had given him.

He opened it, took out the letter and began reading. Even he, who was accustomed to miracles from his master, was amazed. It was a prescription with exact directions how to prepare a salve to cure...a gunshot wound to the chest!

He ran to the castle gate waiving the letter and demanded to be let in but the guards refused. They had strict orders to admit only doctors and despite his arguments and pleas they remained cold and unmoving like a stone wall.

Pierre Louis having heard the ruckus from inside the palace came running out to the gate obviously very irritated, "What do you want here Jew?" he shouted, "Don't tell me you are a doctor? You are no doctor!! Leave here immediately!! What is that you have in your hand? What is that paper you are holding?"

**About to Tear the Prescription into Pieces**

Rav Nissan tried to explain but the Frenchman snatched the prescription from his hand and began to read. "This is your cure?!" He screamed. "This is nonsense!" He was about to tear it into pieces when one of the doctors emerged dejectedly from the castle, saw the commotion and approached.

He asked a few questions, examined the paper, turned facing Pierre with his back to Rab Nissan and whispered. "Don’t send him away, what do you care? They've given up in there. Let the Jew try, he certainly can't hurt.”

Minutes later Rav Nissan was in the Castle, had prepared the medicine according to the Besht’s prescription and was beginning the treatment. Some of it he smeared on the wound, some of it he applied on various parts of the Count's body and every few minutes he repeated the process, exactly according to the instructions.

**The Treatment Works to Everyone’s Surprise**

To everyone's surprise the wound stopped hemorrhaging almost immediately! After a few more minutes the count even seemed to breathe more deeply and evenly. After an hour, instead of being dead as everyone had thought he would be, color returned to his cheeks and he regained consciousness!

The doctors and professors looked on with open mouths and were speechless; they had never seen anything even vaguely like it and Pierre Louis was moved to the essence of his very being; he felt something very potent was happening here but he had no idea what it was.

After several hours the Count was actually strong enough to call Rav Nissan to his bedside and thank him. He even offered to reward him but the Chassid refused. "Seeing you healthy is my reward. Just continue to treat the Jews kindly." he said. "But I do have one request; I want to speak with Pierre Louis alone."

The bewildered Pierre Louis and Rav Nissan went into a side room and closed the door.

After they sat opposite one another Rav Nissan looked him in the eyes and said, "I am a follower of a great Jew called Yisroel Baal Shem. He was the one that wrote that prescription and saved your friend. He told me to come here and....bring you back to Judaism."

**Caught Between Two Worlds**

Pierre was still in shock from the near death of his friend and his strange supernatural recovery. He felt as though he had been transported into another world but he couldn't figure out which world was real; the one of pleasure and power that he had been enjoying for over forty years, or this new strange one of Jews, and miracles.

Pierre just looked at the Chassid, eyes wide in disbelief; "Back? Judaism?" He mumbled to himself. "Back?"

"Just before I left him to come here the Baal Shem Tov told me to tell you that your real name is Pesach Tzvi" continued Rab Nissan. "He said that both your parents were Jewish and your mother even wanted to give you a Jewish education but your father opposed and so you were thrown into French society educated in the best schools and lost your Jewish identity. But now it is time for you to return."

**A Time for Whispered Questions**

"Return? How...How can this Baal Shem person of yours know this? How can he be so sure of these things?" asked the Frenchman in a whisper.

"I have no idea, but from my experience he knows everything," replied Rav Nissan.

"I don't understand" Said Pierre, trying to clear his throat, "Are you saying that I am...a Jew?" A Jew? Mon Dieu, it's impossible!! Impossible!!"

Pierre Louis refused to discuss the subject further, abruptly ended the conversation by promising he would give it further thought and the Chassid left the Castle.

Almost a year later Rav Nissan heard a knock on his door, opened it and there stood a bearded Jew. It was Pierre Louis, or rather Pesech Tzvi, returning to the G-d of his fathers.

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

**Ask the Rabbi**

**Cosmetic Surgery for**

**A “Jewish” Nose?**

**From: Melissa**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*Let’s say I know someone who wants to have a nose job because she feels she has too much of a “Jewish nose” and she feels self-conscious about it and she says it affects her confidence and she’s not happy because of it. Would that be an acceptable reason to do it? And is there anything wrong with it from a Jewish point of view anyway?*

Dear Melissa,

The Torah prohibits mutilating the body in any way. Therefore a person is not allowed to cut, scratch or gash the body, whether directly himself, or by having another person do so. In times of old, people would do this as an expression of mourning, or for spiritual elevation, or to seal a pact, or for any other number of reasons.

Despite the fact that doing so might be for some significant or meaningful reason, it’s still forbidden because it damages the integrity of the body. All the more so it’s prohibited as an act of self-affliction, even if done for temporary alleviation, as in the case of what’s become unfortunately too common nowadays - “cutting”.

**Cutting or Piercing the Body for**

**Purposes of Adornment is Permitted**

However, for the purpose of adorning the body, it is permitted to cut or pierce. The reason for this is that the person’s intention is not to destroy the body, but rather to beautify it. So earrings are permitted for this reason, and the Torah also mentions the use of nose rings and other piercings that were practiced even by our Patriarchs and Matriarchs.

Although this expression of beautifying and adorning is subjective and a function of cultural norms, much of today’s piercings which are done to be cool by being shocking and grotesque probably fit under the first category of forbidden mutilation.

Tattoos would be another example of forbidden cutting or piercing, despite it being done to beautify or adorn the body (and a specific Torah prohibition against tattoos).

**Also Permitted to Cut the Body to Remove**

**Harmful or Even Unattractive Blemishes**

Similarly, not only is it permitted to cut the body in order to adorn it; it’s also permitted to do so in order to remove harmful or even unattractive blemishes. So surgery to remove some harmful situation, or correct some harmful defect is certainly permitted. And even cosmetic surgery to remove or cover some conspicuous and embarrassing blemish like a mole, birthmark, scar etc. is also allowed. This is so even if the person’s embarrassment seems exaggerated or unnecessary. Nevertheless, since he or she is sensitive enough about it to the point of wanting to remove it, they are permitted to do so.

The question is, “Where does removing a ‘Jewish nose’ fit into this discussion”? On the one hand, it clearly can’t be considered mutilation since it’s being done to “enhance” one’s appearance. On the other hand, it’s clearly problematic to compare it to the removal of a mole or birthmark.

**An Aid in Breathing Would be Permitted**

If the surgery was needed to aid in breathing or to eliminate chronic congestion, for example, that would be corrective and permitted. And even if the person simply felt embarrassed by an oversized nose looking ugly or unattractive, that might also be acceptable.

However, it sounds like in the case of your friend, and that’s certainly true in many cases, the only reason for having a nose job is to remove the “blemish” or “defect” of being and/or looking Jewish. This form of extreme, “neurotic assimilationism” is certainly unacceptable. The person would be better off learning to be proud of her Jewishness and working to acquire the level of maturity and inner peace to be happy with being and looking Jewish.

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

**The Prosecutor: They're Wrong, But Are You Right?**

**By** [**Sara Yoheved Rigler**](http://www.aish.com/authors/48865432.html)

No doubt about it -- Devorah was wrong. At the end of the lecture I gave for her organization, I expected her to reach into her purse, pull out my check, and hand it to me. Instead she said, "Is it okay if we pay you tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow?" I was disconcerted. I'm used to being paid at the end of a speaking engagement. "That won't be easy," I protested. "I live inside the walls of the Old City. How will you get it to me tomorrow?"

"It's not a problem. We have a driver who does errands for us."

**Reluctantly Agrees to “Tomorrow”**

"Okay," I muttered reluctantly. "Tomorrow."

I knew getting the check the next day would be a big hassle. Since the Old City is inaccessible to cars, I would have to trek out to the street and wait for their driver. Devorah's inefficiency would make me waste time -- my pet peeve. Besides, Devorah, an observant Jew, surely knew about the Torah's injunction to "pay the worker at the end of the day" [or at the end of the week or month, if that's the mutually agreed period], and she willfully ignored it.

Sure enough, getting my check the next day cost me six phone calls to Devorah and the driver, a five-minute trek from my house to meet the car, and a 15-minute wait for the driver, who got stuck in traffic. I was miffed, and it was all Devorah's fault.

**Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller’s**

**Weekly Class Ran Over Time**

That night Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller taught her weekly class in my home. Until the moment the class began, I was embroiled in trying to renew my Norton Anti-virus. Symantec's website wouldn't accept my order. The Customer Service rep finally promised that her supervisor would phone me at 10:15 that night.

The class was supposed to end at 10:00, but it went over by ten minutes. Although I always collect the money from the students, this time I handed the collection jar to a friend and hurried into my "office" to receive the call from Symantec. Rebbetzin Heller was still there when I emerged ten minutes later. I walked her out and thanked her for a great class.

Just as she had blown it, so had I.

An hour and a half later, I noticed the collection jar full of money. I had forgotten to give Rebbetzin Heller her payment. I had failed to "pay the worker at the end of the day."

**Felt Guilty for the Very Act**

**I Had Condemned Devorah**

I was mortified. I myself had become guilty of the very act for which I had condemned Devorah!

I realized I was so focused on scrutinizing Devorah's failure to pay me on time that I had failed to scrutinize my own response. I hadn't even bothered to ask myself: What's the right response to her wrong action?

Now it hit me: My response should have been to judge her favorably. Searching for extenuating circumstances would have replaced my critical attitude with a compassionate one. "*She single-handedly organized the whole event*," I could have told myself. "*She had a myriad of details to attend to. So she accidentally forgot one item. It could happen to any of us.*"

Just as she had blown it, so had I.

**The Other Way Around**

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, the 18th century founder of the Mussar Movement, said: "We should worry about our own spiritual lacks and our neighbor's material lacks. But usually we do it the other way around. We worry about our neighbor's spiritual lacks and our own material lacks."

So what's the right response when someone does something wrong?

The Torah gives a number of guidelines:

Judge the person favorably.

Do not speak lashon hara [negative, true speech] about the person.

Do not hate the person in your heart.

Do not carry a grudge and do not take revenge

Give rebuke privately, but only if you can do it with love and make the person feel like s/he was helped rather than criticized.

View what happened as a message from Above to examine your own deeds.

Keeping this list in mind, imagine how differently you would react when someone does something wrong.

At 3 PM the boss leaves the office to attend a funeral. Ten minutes later, Elaine ducks out of work, smug that she can get away with it. You're about to gossip to your coworker about Elaine taking off, but instead you stop yourself and ask: *What's the right response?*

Ask yourself the simple question, "What's the right response?"

When you tell your 12-year-old son that he can't go out until he finishes his homework, he answers back with real chutzpah. You're about to let him have it, but instead you ask yourself: *What's the right response?*

Sitting with a group of friends at a party, Steve cracks a joke at Marci's expense. She's embarrassed and runs out of the room. You're about to tear into Steve with, "You're such a jerk," when you ask yourself: *What's the right response?*

Asking the simple question, "What's the right response?" will not only divert you from a carping, critical attitude, but will also save you from doing something that may be as bad or worse than the wrongdoing you've witnessed.

**The Rightest Response**

Danny, at 25 years old, was in the process of exploring his relationship to Judaism. He came to Jerusalem to spend a year studying at Aish HaTorah. He rented an apartment and bought an expensive motorcycle to get around Jerusalem's congested streets.

One evening he went to visit his teacher, Rabbi Yom Tov Glazer. When he emerged from Rabbi Glazer's apartment a couple hours later, Danny's motorcycle was gone. It had been stolen.

Danny was horrified. The motorcycle had cost him a big chunk of his savings. Even worse, however, was that his tefillin were in the motorcycle's storage box. He had received this fine set of tefillin from his parents for his Bar Mitzvah. Although his family is observant, Danny had stopped putting on tefillin some five years before. Still, he carried them with him wherever he went, perhaps as a kind of talisman. The motorcycle, however costly, was replaceable, but he could never replace his Bar Mitzvah tefillin.

**Danny Immediately Called the Police**

Danny immediately called the police. Then Rabbi Glazer took him in his car to scan the neighborhood. Motorcycle thieves typically roll their booty to a nearby hiding place, then return with tools to get the engine working. Danny and Rabbi Glazer spent an hour combing a five-block radius around the scene of the crime, without success. Finally Rabbi Glazer dropped off a heartbroken Danny at his apartment.

Danny could have responded with bitterness, resentment, or anger at the thief who had ripped him off. Instead he turned the spotlight on himself and examined his own deeds. He concluded that because he was not putting the tefillin on each day as he was supposed to, he had lost the privilege of owning them. He resolved that the next morning he would go out and buy a new set of tefillin, and he would henceforth put tefillin on daily.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Glazer drove home. Because of the dearth of parking spaces near his apartment, he leased a parking space in a private lot six blocks away. He parked his car in his space. As he started to walk away, he glanced over the low wall beside his car. There, hidden in the shadows, was Danny's motorcycle.

And inside the storage box were Danny's Bar Mitzvah tefillin.

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

**It Once Happened**

**Giving a Loan to a Tzaddik**

Rabbi Leib Sarah's was a man who never rested. How could he when there were always so many mitzvot which demanded his attention? Neither the sweltering heat nor the frozen winds prevented him from trudging along the paths of towns and villages. His mission was to collect funds to sustain hidden tzadikim and ransom Jews held captive by rapacious landlords.

Reb Leib Sarah's was well acquainted with the whereabouts of the many beneficent Jews who never refused to contribute for these holy causes. On one of his many trips through the countryside near Berdichev, Reb Leib Sarah's happened to meet a young man who made his living buying and selling spices.

**An Urgent Need for a Loan of 500 Rubles**

"Young man, I have a very urgent need for 500 rubles," Reb Leib Sarah's said. The tzadik was well known, and although the young merchant had earmarked the money for purchasing merchandise, he didn't hesitate for a moment. He handed over the entire sum (which also happened to be all the money he had) and accepted in exchange a promissory note stating the date on which the loan would come due.

Reb Leib Sarah's instructed the young man to sell whatever merchandise remained in his possession and he went on his way to accomplish the holy mission which awaited him. As for the young merchant, since he had no more money, he had nothing to do in Berdichev. The only problem was what to tell his wife who was patiently waiting for the new merchandise for their shop.

**Doesn’t Tell His Wife the Complete Truth**

The young man had no choice but to return, but he hesitated telling her the truth. So he decided on a likely story; he told her that he had failed to find the proper merchandise, and that he would make the trip again a few weeks hence. That seemed to satisfy her, but the young man looked forward anxiously to the date when the loan would be repaid and he could resume his business.

Finally the due date arrived and the young man stood in his shop waiting on customers. A man he had never seen before walked in and bought a large quantity of spices. He paid the entire bill and departed, but as soon as he was out of sight, the young man noticed that the customer had left a wallet on the counter. He dashed outside, but the man was nowhere to be seen.

**Can’t Find the Stranger in Shul**

"Oh well," he thought, "I will probably meet him at the afternoon prayers." So, he took the wallet with him - certain that he would encounter the owner - but the stranger was not in the synagogue.

The young man had just finished his prayers when he heard a familiar voice behind him ask, "Have you received your payment yet?" He looked and there was Reb Leib Sarah's.

"No, I haven't received it yet," the young man replied. Reb Leib Sarah's seemed surprised, but he said nothing and they parted.

When the young man went home he decided to open the wallet and count the money. To his surprise, it contained exactly the sum he was owed, and since this was the day on which the money was due, he began to think that this was indeed his payment.

He ran back to the shul to find Reb Leib Sarah's and tell him about the payment. The tzadik was waiting for him, and was very pleased with the character of the young man. He had not even mentioned the tardiness of the payment when they had first spoken in the shul, and then the merchant had so swiftly come to tell him of the payment. He decided to reward the generous and good- hearted young man.

"Young man," the tzadik said, "you may make a request of me, and if I am able, I will fulfill it."

The young man didn't have to think for a moment. He instantly blurted out his desire: "I would love to see one of the 36 hidden tzadikim who sustain the world."

**Not an Easy Promise to Fulfill**

"That is not easy, but I shall fulfill my promise," answered Reb Leib Sarah's. The young man was brimming with happiness at the prospect of actually seeing one of these holy men with his own eyes. The long and arduous journey was nothing to him, and when he entered the remote little town, his joy could not be contained.

"Go to that street and enter the third house. There, sitting on the floor, you will see a man holding a needle and thread. Ask him to patch up your coat. As he works, you will be able to gaze into his face."

Knocks on the Door of the Old Man

The merchant found the house, knocked and was ushered in. There, on the floor, sat an old man holding a needle and thread as if sewing something. "Could you please mend my coat?" the merchant asked the old man.

The tzadik took the garment into hands unaccustomed to sewing and laboriously began to stitch the garment. Meanwhile the young merchant thirstily drank in the shining features of the holy man.

When the repair was finished, the merchant paid with a whole ruble and took his leave. Returning to Reb Leib Sarah's, the young man was still under the spell of what he had witnessed.

The experience of having seen the holy face of the tzadik illuminated the life of the young merchant. And because he merited to see such holiness, he was given the strength to continue his selfless love of his fellow Jews all the rest of his life.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bamidbar 5773 edition of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization.*

**The Bobover Rav Demonstrates**

**The Wisdom of Gentle Persuasion**

**By Dovid Silber**

A man once came to the Bobover Rav, Harav Shlomo Halberstam, zt”l, regarding a sticky financial problem. This person (we will call him Reuven) was a remodeler who had contracted to install an ultramodern kitchen with the newest appliances for a customer (we will call him Shimon) for a large sum of money.

The contract called for installment payments throughout the job and the customer had kept to the deal. Immediately after completion, however, with an outstanding balance of several thousand dollars, he refused to honor his commitment.

Weeks and months passed and the amount was not paid. Reuven tried whatever means possible to collect, calling Shimon daily and demanding some form of payment schedule, but to no avail. Because Shimon was a Bobover Chassid, Reuven came to the Rav requesting his assistance.

The Rav listened attentively to all the details and asked some questions. He wanted to know the specifics about the raw materials used, their country of origin and similar particulars. Despite his absolute befuddlement at the Rav’s interest in the technical details, Reuven answered all the questions.

Shortly after Reuven left, the Rav asked his assistant to get in touch with Shimon and to invite him to visit. Hearing that the Rav wished to see him, he left in the middle of work and came over immediately.

**The Rav Welcomes Shimon**

The Rav welcomed Shimon with his characteristically sparkling smile and reassuring warmth, inviting him to sit down next to him, while he made conversation about the welfare of Shimon’s family, their health and education.

After a few minutes, the Rav addressed him in an intimate, whispering tone, saying: “Shimon, my dear, I have invited you here in order to get your opinion on a specific subject. You know me in the capacity of Rav, a spiritual leader. But I have another role to play, and that is to be a good husband to my Rebbetzin.

“Recently, it occurred to me that our kitchen is quite old and neglected, and I’ve heard that you have recently installed a beautiful new kitchen. I was wondering if you would mind sharing your experiences with me.”

The Rav led him to the kitchen and pointed out his general plan, surprising Shimon immensely with his familiarity with the technical details of kitchen remodeling.

**Mainly Concerned Over Satisfaction**

“My main concern,” the Rav explained, “is whether you and your wife were totally satisfied with the workmanship, and if the work met your original specifications. If so, it might be worthwhile for the Rebbetzin to visit your home and see for herself.”

“It will be an absolute delight and honor to host the Rebbetzin in our home,” Shimon said enthusiastically. “The kitchen, is boruch Hashem, totally finished and my wife and I are exceptionally happy with it. I am certain that the Rebbetzin will also be pleased with it,” Shimon said with delight.

“One more little question to you, Shimon,” the Rav said. “There is something that concerns me more than anything else. I’ve been told that often a contractor will do excellent work, but at the conclusion of the job there are dozens of loose ends. Though they are minor, these unfinished details are very irksome to the housewife who is eager to see the job totally finished. I was wondering, how was your experience regarding this concern?”

“I’ll be totally forthright with the Rav,” Shimon said. “My wife and I were both absolutely satisfied, both with the workmanship as well as with the final touches. Our contractor did not leave a single item unfinished.”

Hearing this truly enthusiastic report about the contractor, the Rav again asked Shimon to join him in his study and personally offered him a chair. He then asked the gabbai to kindly bring in some kibud (light refreshments) “for our dear visitor.”

Shimon was overwhelmed, not knowing how to handle so much attention, first as the Rav’s personal consultant, and then as the Rav’s “dear visitor.”

**An Important Request to Ask**

After tasting some of the kibud, the Rav turned to Shimon and began talking to him in a loving, fatherly tone. “Shimon, my dear, I have an important request to ask of you. I have now heard from your own mouth the details about your new kitchen and how totally satisfied both you and your wife are with all the facets of the job.

“I wish to share with you a statement from our Sages. Chazal teach us that a man’s personality can be identified “b’kiso, b’koso ub’kaaso” - with his purse (money), with his cup (when intoxicated) and when he’s angry. Note that money is one of the key elements in determining the values of a human being.

“Let me give you some insight into the phenomenal significance of this statement. Hashem’s relationship with man is reciprocal. If a person deals with others with integrity, then Hashem showers that person with abundance and prosperity.

“On the other hand, if we shortchange others, then Hashem will do likewise and will put us at the same disadvantage, a prospect we hope will never come to pass. I ask you, Shimon, my dear, do yourself a favor and pay the bill you owe Reuven expeditiously.”

The Rav’s words, spoken with kindness and love and without the slightest trace of accusation, had the proper effect. That very afternoon Shimon paid the bill in full to the satisfaction of his friend Reuven, to the satisfaction of his beloved Rav and to the satisfaction of his Father in Heaven - HaKodesh Boruch Hu.

*(Editor’s Note: The above is excerpted from “Noble Lives - Noble Deeds: Captivating Stories and Biographical Profiles of Spiritual Giants” by Dovid Silber. It is reprinted with permission of the publisher - Mesorah Publications Ltd. The book is available in Jewish bookstores or from the publisher: (718) 921-9000).*

**Chasidic Story #808**

**When Someone Cares**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

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Every year, on his way from Petersburg to the annual regional fair in Nizhni-Novogorod, a certain wealthy chasid of the *Tzemach Tzedek* would first make a stop in Lubavitch to see his Rebbe, and then in the small village of Dobromishl to visit an aging pious sage who had been his childhood teacher. He would leave a sum of money to help with his upkeep and then continue on his way.

One year the chasid was delayed, and he left home only after the fair had already begun. Nevertheless, he stopped in Lubavitch to receive a blessing, but intended to skip his visit to Dobromishl. He asked the *Tzemach Tzedek'*s opinion on this.

"Since this has been your custom for many years," said the Rebbe, "it is not advisable to diverge from it."

Heeding this advice, the chasid traveled to Dobromishl and visited his old teacher, who greeted him with a warm welcome. Being in a great hurry, however, he planned to leave immediately after praying Mincha, but even before he finished, the sky darkened and a fierce storm set in.

The teacher invited him to remain at his home overnight, but the chasid insisted on keeping to his original schedule. However, when he was then beset by a severe headache, he had no choice but to agree to his host's redoubled pleas that he stay.

**Awoke Feeling Very Ill**

The following morning, the chasid awoke feeling very ill, suffering with what appeared to be a dangerously high fever. A doctor was urgently summoned to the village from the nearby town of Orsha. When he was diagnosed with typhus, a telegram was immediately sent to his family, and to the Tzemach Tzedek, that he should pray on the chasid's behalf.

After eight difficult weeks, he was finally well enough to travel to Lubavitch. He was not able to suppress a sense of grievance toward the Rebbe who had advised him to visit his childhood teacher, for it had been on the way to Dobromisl that he had contracted a cold, which no doubt led to the typhoid fever.

Indeed, as soon as he entered the Tzemach Tzedek's study, he broke into tears: "Rebbe, why did you send me to Dobromishl?"

**The Word’s Aramaic Meaning**

The *Tzemach Tzedek* replied by quoting the Talmud: " 'A man's legs may be depended upon to take him to the place to which he is summoned' - that is, to where G-d has ordained that his life should end. The word for 'summoned'--*demisba'ei*--can also be understood to mean 'pray' in Aramaic. That means that 'A man's legs may be depended upon to take him to the place where there is someone who is able to pray for him.' You owe your life to the devoted prayers of your childhood teacher!"

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *"L'ma'an Yishm'a'u"* #176 and *"A Treasury of Chasidic Tales"* p. 71-73.

Connection: Weekly Reading (end)-Num. 12:13-Moshe's prayer that Miriam be healed.

Biographical note: Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn [29 Elul 1789-13 Nissan 1866], the third Rebbe of Chabad, was known as the Tzemach Tzedek, after his books of Halachic responsa and Talmudic commentary called by that name. He was renowned not only as a Rebbe, but also as a leading scholar in his generation in both the revealed and hidden aspects of Torah.

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