**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas vayigash 5781**

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**Nothing Is Coincidental,**

**Not Even a Set of Sofas**

**By [Sofya Sara Esther Tamarkin](https://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/23400/jewish/Tamarkin-Sofya-Sara-Esther.htm%22%20%5Co%20%22Browse%20more%20articles%20by%20Tamarkin%2C%20Sofya%20Sara%20Esther)**



 Shmuel Aulov was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (then part of the Soviet Union), and came to the United States as a teenager in 1991. He went to public school and had little knowledge of Judaism.

 When Shmuel, known as Alex, was 15, his cousins invited him to an event in a synagogue. He remembers that the rabbi inquired about his last name. “The rabbi asked me if I was a Kohen. I did not know the answer. The rabbi told me to ask my father, and when I did, I was surprised to learn that our family are Kohanim.

 “Raised in the Soviet Union, we couldn’t openly practice our traditions, and my father never told me about our special role among the Jewish people. I went back to the rabbi to share my news, and he confirmed that in fact my last name, Aulov, was common among Kohanim.

**Told that He Had Special Responsibilities as a Cohen**

 “He explained that this meant that I have special responsibilities among the Jewish people. I felt both curious and empowered by this newly discovered role.”

 Shmuel began to learn about Judaism and his role as a Cohen. He dedicated hundreds of hours to learning, eventually completing the entire Talmud. In time, he became a licensed *shochet* (a ritual kosher slaughter) and a *mohel* for the Bukharian community in New York. He became a teacher for bar mitzvah age boys, patiently teaching them their Torah portion, rejoicing in celebrating each child’s milestone. Shmuel’s wife, Leah, was making her own sacrifices by sharing her husband’s time with those in need of his guidance and wisdom.

 As time passed, the Aulov family was ready to move into a more spacious apartment. Leah recalls, “I was excited to buy furniture, matching accessories and fixtures for our new home in Queens, N.Y. While shopping around, we were happy to hear that our friend found a wholesale furniture company that offered magnificent discounts in Philadelphia, where she lives. On Sunday, we set up an appointment to see the showroom, driving two hours to the warehouse.

**Offered a Set of Black Couches**

 “We decided on the furniture for the children’s rooms, master bedroom and kitchen. Yet there was no option we liked for our living room. The warehouse owner suggested that we take a set of black couches that included an armchair, a love seat and a sofa for almost no cost. This was his last set, he explained, and he wanted to give it away. While my husband found this to be a great saving, I wasn’t thrilled. The couches were black and didn’t match the design of our new living room. But I decided to make it work for the time being.

 “The owner offered to deliver our furniture on his truck. While following the truck home, my mother called me with a surprise. My parents had decided to give us a gift: white leather couches that I had always dreamed about for our living room. Alex and I were so grateful.

 “Now the issue was what to do with the set of black couches. My husband and I decided to donate the set to anyone who needed furniture. I called a friend and asked if she or anyone she knows might need a new set of couches. She told me that she had recently bought new furniture; however, her sister-in-law was looking for new couches. Then my friend paused and added that this family is very ‘particular’ and only wanted furniture in black. This seemed like a match made in Heaven, and my husband and I were so pleased to offer to deliver the set on our way home.”

 It’s not often that we learn of the complexity of someone’s circumstances or what role we play in seemingly random occurrences. A few hours after we parted, Leah called to share the full side of this unbelievable story.

 One year ago, Leah’s friend’s sister-in-law and her husband lost their precious 3-year-old daughter. She fell asleep on the couch and died in her sleep from a brain aneurysm. In total despair, the family threw away their old couches and decided not to have any living-room furniture for the entire year. As time went on and the horrific year was coming to the end, the family symbolically decided to purchase a set of black living-room couches. But due to their overwhelming depression, the family had also suffered financial difficulties and were struggling to make ends meet.

**A Few Days Before the First Anniversary of the Tragic Event**

 When Leah asked if anyone needed furniture, she was unaware that the offer to donate black couches came a few days before the first-year anniversary of the tragic event.

 Shmuel remembers, “It was clear that without understanding the ‘plan,’ we were part of something bigger than we thought. Here we were, buying furniture for our new home, and hours later, we were at the door of the family who suffered an unimaginable loss. I knew that we were at the right time in the right place.

 “We rang the doorbell and introduced ourselves to the couple. It was difficult to conceal our emotions. Leah simply said that her friend suggested that the set of new black couches might find its home here. The family was surprised at our visit but agreed to accept our delivery. Their reaction as the new couches were being unloaded from the truck was indescribable. ‘It’s a miracle,’ I heard the woman say. ‘A message.’

 “Leah and I stood silently, as the family saw the black couches simply appear in front of their house at the time they needed them.”

 Events around us are not chaotic occurrences, but carefully crafted, interwoven threads of one “big picture.” In the words of the Rebbe, in a letter in 1951, to someone who was experiencing anxiety: “Looking from the inner dimension, firmly affix your thought—with simple faith possessed by all Jews who are ‘believers and sons of believers’—that G‑d, who created the world 5711 years ago, creates the world anew each and every moment, and conducts it according to His will.”

 Our world is wired by our individual journeys, meeting in time and space in accordance with the Artist’s vision. This makes each one of us an irreplaceable fiber interwoven into the fabric of the master plan, designed by the Creator of the World, Himself.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayeitzei 5781 email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**Story #119**

**Wedding Hardships**

**By Eliezer Shore**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](https://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=00012%5e00:001VjZbJ00002zRS&count=1606318654&randid=57771768&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=2&randid=57771768)



 My wedding day “the happiest day of my life, my long awaited dream come true, the blessing for which I prayed daily.”

 At least, that is what it was supposed to be.

 Some people get married amid fanfare and grand excitement, with all the thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai. For others, meeting their life-partner is more like encountering a long-lost friend, and marriage like slipping on a pair of comfortable house shoes.

 There are those, however, who fairly have to drag themselves to the *chupah (wedding canopy)* their cold feet weighing them down like icebergs. On the verse, “G-d makes a home for the lonely; He leads out the prisoners “*b’koshorot”* (Psalms 68:7), Chazal comment, “Some people marry in *bechi*(tears) and some people marry in *shir*(song)” (*Bereishis Rabbah*68:4). Sadly, I was among the former.

 After ten frustrating years on the *shiduch* scene, having spoken to dozens of matchmakers, dated hundreds of girls and shed a thousand tears, I finally met the woman who was going to be my wife. We went out a total of seven times before becoming engaged, and a mere three months later, I was already donning my wedding suit and preparing for the ceremony.

 My bride was excited, my friends overjoyed, and my parents relieved. Only I was terrified.

**Thirty-Seven Years Old at the Time**

 Looking back now, almost two decades later, I can admit that marriage had been for me a terrifying prospect - one that became exponentially worse the older I grew. I was thirty-seven at the time, and all those years of hopeless dating had taken their toll on me, filling me with doubts and fears: Is she the right one? Am I making a mistake? Should I wait for someone better?

 But, as I said, at that moment, straightening my tie and dusting off my new hat, these questions were no longer relevant. The wedding day was now upon us and it was far too late to back out (though the thought had crossed my mind). I recalled a famous quote, “Send not to know for whom the wedding bell tolls. It tolls for thee.

 To make matters worse, I was alone in my doubts, with no one to share my fears but G-d Himself, to whom I turned in constant, heartfelt prayers.

 I spent the day of my wedding rushing around Jerusalem on last minute errands, praying *Mincha*at the Kotel, immersing in a *mikvah*.

 My good friend Simcha accompanied me through all this. As my *shomer*(“protector”) , I suspect that he saw his job more as preventing me from running away than getting me to the *chupah* safely.

**Dropped an Unexpected Bomb**

 By the time we finished all the errands it was already late, and the time to set out for the hall had slipped past. I quickly changed into my wedding suit at Simcha’s house, near the Bar-Ilan intersection in north Jerusalem, and prepared to set out for our destination: the wedding hall at the Diplomat Hotel in Talpiot about a half-hour drive away. It was at that moment that Simcha dropped an unexpected bomb.

 “Meir,” he said, “We’re running very late. Your *chupah* is scheduled for an hour. I’m afraid that if I drive you there, then drive back here to pick up my family, and then drive to Talpiot again, I’ll miss the *chupah*. I know it’s not so nice, but would you be willing to take a taxi there?”

 “A taxi!?” my mind screamed. “No! No!” After waiting so many years to get married, after suffering so much doubt and turmoil during the engagement period, after finally overcoming it all, at the very least, I wanted to travel to my wedding with a good friend.

 But instead, I graciously replied, ‘Of course, Simcha, no problem” for what else could I say? And so, we called the Bar-Ilan Taxi service and gave them the address. “Five minutes,” they replied.

 And so, five minutes passed and another five minutes and another five minutes.

 This is ridiculous! I declared. I’m going to be really late! This isn’t fair!

 At last, we heard the horn of the taxi outside in the street. I bid Simcha farewell and ran down to the waiting cab. I sat down in the back seat and gave the driver the address. “The Diplomat Hotel in Talpiot,” I told him.

**Kicked Out of the Taxi**

 “Sorry. I don’t want to go there.”

 “WHAT!!?” I responded.

 “You heard me. This is my last call of the day, and I live around here. I don’t want to drive to Talpiot.”

 I was almost speechless.

 “But I ordered the taxi. I told them the destination!”

 “Sorry,” he repeated.

 “Listen,” I said, trying to appeal to his Jewish sensitivities. “I’m a *chatan*and I’m late for my own *chupah* . Surely, you would take me to that.

 “No, he replied. “I’m not interested. You can get out of the cab!”

 By now I was livid. “Is this how you treat a customer!? Is this how you treat a *chatan* !? What type of a Jew are you!? I yelled at him, and stormed out of the cab.

 I rushed back to Simcha’s house. “Simcha! The taxi driver didn’t want to take me. There isn’t time to order another one. I’m running out to the street to see if I can hail one down.”

**Ran to Hail a Taxi**

 I ran down to the street, near the Shmuel Hanavi and Bar-Ilan intersection, and put my hand out to hail a taxi. The street was filled with cars.

 About thirty seconds passed and a mini-van pulled up to the curb. The window rolled down. There, inside, sat four of my good friends from Tsfat!

 “Meir! What are you doing here?” my friend, Aryeh Leib asked.

 I’m on the way to my wedding. What are you doing here?”

 “We’re on our way to your wedding, too!”

 “Well, don’t worry,” I replied, “I promise that you’re not late!”

 Of course, they sat me in the front passenger seat and showed me the honor due a king . [[1]](https://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=00012%5e00:001VjZbJ00002zRS&count=1606318654&randid=57771768&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=2&randid=57771768" \l "_ftn1" \o ") Wedding music blared on the car stereo and someone gave me a cell phone (still a rarity in those days) to call the hall and tell them that I was on the way. In the end, it all worked out better than if I had planned it myself.

 Twenty years have passed since that day - good years and hard years, years of joy and years of challenges. But I’m still married, and I thank G-d every day for my wife and family. Over the years, when I’ve struggled with the inevitable difficulties that married life brings, the tremendous *hashgacha pratis*(Divine supervision) I saw on my wedding day helps me pull through.

 I have no doubt that *Eliyahu Hanavi* (Elijah the Prophet) was involved, But if you ask me who he was in this story, that’s harder to say. Was he embodied by my friends, who saved me in a moment of need, or perhaps he was the taxi driver, whose obstinacy proved to be a blessing in disguise, for which I thank him until today.

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*Source*: **Rabbi Dr. Eliezer Shore** currently lives in Jerusalem, where he is a published writer and author, storyteller, and Torah teacher. The above story appears in his newest book, *“Meeting Elijah”*, available from Amazon*.*

*Connection*:  Weekly Reading (Talk about wedding hardships!)

[[1]](file:///C%3A%5C%5CUsers%5C%5CChaya%20Rachel%5C%5CDownloads%5C%5Cs1198Tsfat2JerusalemWedding.docx%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref1%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) For a chatan on his wedding day is considered a king

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayeitzei 5781 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.*

**The Two Builders**

**By Rabbi Yechiel Spero**

           Though he enjoyed remarkable success with the building of the Ponevezh Yeshivah in Bnei Brak in the early 1940’s, the Ponevezher Rav was not satisfied with merely building a structure of brick, metal, and stone. He wanted to build people, as well.

           After the war, he chose survivors for the manual labor needed in the yeshivah, and trained them on the job. Eli, who had lost just about everything and everyone dear to him, became the yeshivah’s plumber. Before long, he regained some of his spirit and was fully dedicated to the yeshivah’s cause. He was soon joined by Yossel the electrician, and together they helped with the upkeep of the building and unclogging sinks and fixing broken light fixtures. They felt so proud to accomplish and contribute to the yeshivah’s learning that to them these were no menial tasks.



**The Ponnevezh Rav, Rabbi Yosef Shlomo**

**Kahaneman, zt”l (1888-1969)**

           Perhaps the individual who gained most from working for the yeshivah was Moshe Vaitrick, the carpenter. Another war survivor, Moshe was close to despair on many occasions. However, the Ponevezher Rav would not allow him to give up, instead recruiting him to build the shtenders, bookshelves, tables, and chairs for the bet midrash, as well as the bed frames, cabinets, and night tables for the dormitories.

           Summers in Bnei Brak can be sweltering, with temperatures reaching well over 100 degrees, along with stifling humidity – and most yeshivahs did not have air-conditioning. On one exceptionally steamy day during ben hazemanim, Moshe was giving the shtenders a makeover when he found that he was sweating profusely and needed to sit down for a few minutes. While he took his short break, his mind began to wander. As often happened, his memories took him to a world long gone. He thought of his family and friends and allowed himself to feel the sadness once more.

           Suddenly, the Ponevezher Rav walked into the empty bet midrash. From a distance, he saw Moshe sitting there. Noting the slump of Moshe’s shoulders and the difficult working conditions that day, he approached his longtime friend. He placed his hands on Moshe’s shoulders and remarked encouragingly, “Moshe, what a zechut the two of us must have. We’ve been building Yeshivat Ponevezh all these years. Let’s keep it up.”

           Moshe looked up and smiled as he contemplated the Rav’s comment: “The two of us…” Yes, the Ponevezher Rav had placed his broken friend on equal footing with him. One was a world-class Rosh Yeshivah and perhaps the greatest builder of Torah in Eress Yisrael. The other was a simple carpenter building and fixing tables and chairs.

           And yet, it was ‘the two of us…”

           Now invigorated, Moshe smiled again, lifted his hammer, and banged a loose nail back into place. There was much work to be done. After all, along with a special partner, he was building Ponevezh. (The Spark Within by Rabbi Yechiel Spero)

*Reprinted from the Parashat Lech Lecha 5781 email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace as compiled by Rabbi David Bibi.*

**The Holy Miser of Krakow**

 In 1550 in Krakow, during times of poverty, there was a rich Jew named Yossele who was known as The Miser of the community. He hoarded his wealth, and never gave charity. Children would walk by his house and throw stones; people would ignore him as he walked past them. One day, he became ill and he passed away, and the Chevra Kaddisha refused to bury him due to his selfishness.

 Days passed, and his body was not buried. A neighbor felt very sorry for Yossele’s wife and children and decided he would privately bury him himself. He hauled Yossele onto his wagon, dug a grave for him near a tree outside of the cemetery, threw him in and put dirt on him, leaving The Miser to be forgotten.

 The next night, on Thursday, the Chief Rabbi of the community, Reb Kalman, answered a knock on his door. It was a poor person, asking for some money for Shabbat. The rabbi said, “Sure, but I’ve never seen you before. How did you make last Shabbat?”

 The poor man said, “I have never been able to make a decent living, and for 20 years, every Thursday morning, there were five rubles in an envelope on my broken doorstep, but not this morning.”

 Five minutes later, there was another knock at the door. Another pauper asked, “Reb Kalman, please help me, I need some money for Shabbat.” Reb Kalman replied, “I’d be glad to, but where were you last week?” And the man said, “I’ve been living here ten years and unable to make enough money for Shabbat. Every Thursday morning, there was an envelope with 2 rubles underneath my broken door, but not this morning.”



**The tombstone of Yossele the Holy Miser, found in the back of the [Remuh Cemetery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remuh_Cemetery%22%20%5Co%20%22Remuh%20Cemetery) in Krakow, Poland.**

 Within hours, all the poor people in Krakow came to the rabbi and told the same story.

 After Reb Kalman caught on that it was Yossele supporting the entire community, he asked, “How come one gets five rubles, one gets two, one gets 10? How did he know their addresses?”

 So he asked the paupers at his door, and one-by-one they told similar stories. “I knocked on his door, and he answered warmly. Yossele asked me where I’m from, how many children I had, and what I did for a living. He was attentive and kind when he asked me what I would need to tide me over for the week. He wrote everything down and thanked me for visiting.

 “Then out of nowhere, he screamed and threw me out of his house! He told me he would never give up his precious money! I went home to my wife to tell her Yossele was a crazy and selfish miser. And that Thursday, I received five rubles on my doorstep. I had forgotten all about him.”

 Reb Kalman was heartbroken. Not only did Yossele give, he gave like Hashem gives, without credit, the holiest way. And they didn’t even bury him. The rabbi called for a fast day for all of Krakow. The people of the community cried and begged Yossele for forgiveness.

 When Reb Kalman was crying and inconsolable at the ark, he fainted, and Yossele came to him in a dream. “Reb Kalman, please tell all my brothers and sisters there is no reason to fast. This is the way I wanted it. I wanted to have the privilege to give like G-d gives—without anyone knowing. Please tell them I am in *Gan Eden* in the highest place. I have everything I need.”

 Reb Kalman said to him, “But, tell me, Yossele, weren't you lonely being buried there all alone?”

 Yossele smiled and said, “But I was not alone. Our *Avot* Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov were there. Our *Imahot* were there too. Moshe *Rabbenu*, Aharon *Hakohen*, Yosef *Hatzaddik* and David *Hamelech* walked with me, and Eliyahu *Hanavi* led the way with a candle to show me to my place in *Gan Eden*.”

 This is true giving. Yossele did the ultimate *hesed* like Rachel *Imenu*, sacrificing without anyone having any idea. On his elaborate tombstone in Krakow, Reb Kalman had it engraved, saying: *Here lies Yossele Hatzaddik, the Holy Miser.*

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayetze 5781 email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes. The story of the Holy Miser of Krakow is one of the great classics in the Jewish literature. Most versions attribute the rabbi in the story to Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Heller who gave instructions that after his death, he should be buried next to the Holy Miser.*

**The Story of Shvartza Wolf**

 WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY of about eight or nine years old, there was a substitute that we had by the name of Rabbi Brody. It was always very exciting for us when we had him as our substitute Rebbe, especially since he would continue a story that fascinated us children.

 The name of the story he told us was called Shavartza Wolf. [I heard that there is a song based on this story]. I will use it as a mashal. The story was that there was a fellow who wanted a bracha that he should have children, and his Rebbe told him that his only salvation is to go to the forest and ask for a Bracha from Shvartza Wolf.

**Not Highly Regarded in His Hometown**

 Shvartza Wolf was known in the town as a nothing and someone that nobody paid any attention or wanted to have anything to do with. In his desperate situation, the man travelled into the forest and found the home of Shvartza Wolf. Nervously, he knocked on the door, and when it opened he saw the most despicable, filthy looking person that he had ever seen. Desperately he begged Shvartza Wolf for a bracha but Shvartza Wolf refused him.

 That night the fellow slept in the barn outside the home of Shvartza Wolf and cried and repented to Hashem for all his sins and begged Hashem to clean his soul. Feeling like a new soul, the following day, he nervously went and again knocked on the door of Shvartza Wolf's home but this time he saw something totally different than he had seen the day before.

**Now He Saw a Man Who Looked Like an Angel**

 This time he did not see a filthy man, but rather, he saw a man who looked like an angel, his face shining like the sun. He saw kedusha radiating from the face of Reb Shvartza Wolf. He was smiling and he warmly welcomed him into his home. Shvartza Wolf told him that in a year's time he would merit having a son and he should name him after hm.

 The following day Shvartza Wolf was niftar, and one year later this fellow had a child. This is the tale Rabbi Brody told us. Now, whether this story is true or not I don't really care. What I do care about is an important yesod (principle) in life. The yesod is, that how we view others has very much to do with exactly what is going on inside of us.

**The Lacking is in Those with Certain Levels of Kedusha**

 One who is packed with garbage will have a lot of trouble feeling kedusha and seeing the kedusha in others even of his Rebbeim and teachers. We have to understand that most of the time it is not a lackingן in their greatness, rather it is a lacking in us, because we are lacking certain levels of kedusha (holiness) ,that is why we have trouble seeing it in them.

 However, the more we work on our level of kedusha, the more we will come to recognize and see the greatness in the ones who are great. As this means that if someone says something negative about another, ultimately, he is probably the one who possesses that negativity.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeitzei 5781 email of Eitz HaChayim.*

**The Old Sinner’s Gold Coin**



 The famed chasid Reb Zalman Zezmer z”l traveled as an emissary of the Alter Rebbe, R’ Schneur Zalman of Liadi zt”l. Prior to embarking on his journey, the Rebbe blessed Reb Zalman with success and gave him a most unusual instruction: to avoid staying in any house where the front door faced east.

 Reb Zalman set out on his way, pondering his Rebbe’s strange directive. One snowy night found Reb Zalman trekking through a forest. As the night wore on, the cold became more and more intense. Fearing for his life, Reb Zalman was relieved to see a light in the distance. He approached and knocked on the door of a house. It even had a Mezuza! A Jewish home!

 A kindly old woman opened the door and invited him in for a hot drink. “Sit here by the stove and have a cup of tea. The men will soon return. They will put your horse in the barn. Please sit down.”

 Just as he sat down and began thawing out he realized that he hadn’t davened Mincha yet. He asked the woman which direction was east so as to face Jerusalem. He then davened wholeheartedly, thanking Hashem for his good fortune. But as he finished, it struck him that something was wrong: the eastern wall was the one in which the main entrance of the house was situated!

 Without hesitation, he put on his coat and walked to the door, saying apologetically, “I’ll be right back,” but the door was locked. “I forgot something in the wagon,” he called to the old woman, who had slipped out of the room. Suddenly a key turned in the door and four brawny young men entered from the storm. As soon as they saw their visitor, they grabbed him, emptied his pockets, tied him up in a corner, and sat down to eat while their mother examined the booty.

 “Well, look what we have here!” She held up the thick wad of money she found in his wallet. “Looks like we caught a big fish this time.” One of the sons examined the money, went to the cupboard, took out a large bottle of vodka and put it on the table with a bang. “Brothers, lets celebrate! G-d has been good to us! We have enough money here for a long, long time!”

 Then the door opened again and it was their father. “Aha!” He shouted as he looked at the money on the table and the bound victim on the floor. “Good work boys! Excellent! We’ll have to kill him though. I’m glad you left him for me. You know what? In the morning I’ll take care of him. Now let’s drink to our good fortune!” Before long they were all drunk as Lot and forgot completely about the unfortunate chasid.

 Late that night, when they were all sleeping soundly, the father woke, looked around to make sure that no one else was awake, and tiptoed over to Reb Zalman. He motioned him to be silent, cut his ropes, and silently ordered him to rise. He returned to the chasid his coat and whispered in his ear, “Here is your money back,” as he slipped the wallet into his coat pocket.

 The father then tiptoed to the door, opened it and whispered to the chasid, “Now go! Take your horse and flee here as fast as you can - run for your life.” But before the chasid could make his exit, the man pressed a gold coin into his hand. “This is for charity from an old sinner. Tell your Rebbe to please pray for me.” Dawn was beginning to light up the horizon, the storm had stopped, and the grateful chasid set out briskly on the road back home. When he entered the Rebbe’s room,R’ Schneur Zalman looked up at him and smiled. “I know what happened, you don’t have to tell me. I was up all night interceding on your behalf.” The chasid produced the golden coin and communicated the old thief’s request. The Rebbe took the coin and wedged it in a crack in the wall next to his desk and said no more.

 Fifteen years passed and R’ Zalman Zezmer, who was now married with a family, had become one of the Rebbe’s gabbaim (attendants). One day, he answered the door to an old beggar and told him to wait. When he entered the Rebbe’s room and informed him that there was a beggar at the door, the Rebbe pulled the gold coin from the crack where it had been resting for the past fifteen years and told the chasid that this was the old man who had released him years ago. It seems that when his wife and sons awoke and realized what he had done, they beat him and drove him from the house. Just a few hours after that, the police made a surprise raid and took the mother and sons off to prison. From then on, the old man began a life of wandering and atonement, waiting for a sign that his repentance had been accepted in Heaven.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeitzei 5781 email of Torah Tavlin.*