

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS BESHALACH 5783

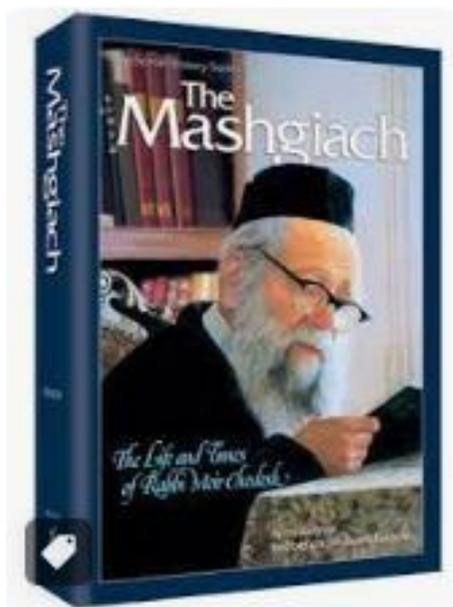
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The Mashgiach And the Doctor



The Mashgiach of Yeshivas Chevron, R' Meir Chodosh zt"l, was once hospitalized due to a serious illness. When a young intern entered R' Meir's room to draw blood from his arm, R' Meir asked all his visitors to leave the room. This was most unusual, for R' Meir generally appreciated when his family was present during doctors' visits.

Surprised as they were, though, his family and visitors complied with his wishes and waited outside until the procedure was finished. As the visitors filed back into his room, R' Meir explained.

“Drawing blood can be a tricky procedure, even for an experienced doctor. It isn’t always easy to find a vein, especially in the arm of an elderly person. I knew the young intern must be feeling nervous and under pressure, and I figured the last thing he wanted was a crowd of people watching him and scrutinizing every action and procedure he did to their grandfather. Imagine how flustered he would have been had it been necessary for him to make several attempts to pierce my vein, and with an audience yet! That is why I asked you to leave.”

Reprinted from the Parshas Vaera 5783 email of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavlin.

The Power of a Note

Every year, Rabbi Perlman,* a Rebbi of sixth-grade boys in Brooklyn, gives a major test on the Gemara that the children have learned since Chanukah. The day of the test arrived and there was great excitement and trepidation in the class. Yanky,* who never did well in class, was sitting unusually serenely in his seat.

Rabbi Perlman called the class to order and reinforced that from the moment he gave out the papers, there would be no talking permitted at all. The boys began writing feverishly. The rebbi sat quietly at his desk, scanning the boys as some wrote, some thought, some erased and wrote again.

Yanky Took a Piece of Paper from His Shirt Pocket

And then he saw it. Yanky had taken from his shirt pocket a piece of paper and put it on top of the test paper. Rabbi Perlman was aghast! Did Yanky think he wouldn’t see it? Yanky looked at the paper, put it back into his pocket, and began answering a question. Rabbi Perlman decided not to say anything yet.

But Yanky kept doing it over and over – answering some questions, taking out the paper, reading from it, and going back to the test. Rabbi Perlman couldn’t understand it. Yanky was not the smartest in the class, but he had a great enthusiasm for learning and was known as a sincere boy. And now he wasn’t even trying to hide his obvious cheating.

One of the Last to Hand in His Test

Yanky was one of the last to hand in his test, but he did so with a contented smile. Upon dismissal, the rebbi motioned to Yanky to come with him into the hall, from where he led him to the teachers’ lounge. Rabbi Perlman asked him how he thought he did on the test.

Yanky replied confidently that he thought he did really well on this one.

“You knew all the answers?” asked the rebbi.

“I really studied hard this time and I even had my father learn the Gemara with me,” Yanky replied.

“Can I ask you some of the questions?” the rebbi asked. Yanky seemed puzzled. He answered the three questions posed. But why was Rabbi Perlman questioning him?

Asked About the Paper in His Pocket

Then the rebbi asked, “Would you like to tell me what you were doing with that paper you had in your pocket?”

Yanky was shocked that he was suspected of cheating. “Rebbi,” he blurted out as tears welled in his eyes, “I did not cheat, I know the material. You can check my paper.”

The rebbi took out Yanky’s test paper and began going through the entire test; indeed, every question was answered correctly. Then the rebbi said, “But Yanky, this is the first time you got 100 on a test. How did you manage to do that?”

Yanky then felt he had to show the rebbi the paper he had been looking at throughout the test. Rabbi Perlman was surprised to see that it was his own handwriting! At the most recent PTA meeting, he had given Yanky’s father a note in which he had written, “Yanky’s cheerful demeanor and friendly personality make him a class leader. With his effort and enthusiastic learning, he will grow into a talmid chachom.”

Inspired Him with the Willpower to Continue Trying

He had given it to Yanky’s father so that his son would read it and know that his rebbi truly had confidence in him. Before Rabbi Perlman could say anything, Yanky said, “You gave this to my father at PTA. And every time I’m about to give up, I read it and it gives me the willpower to continue trying. Because, rebbi, if you believe in me, then I believe in myself.”

Rabbi Perlman was stunned at the impact of one little note. He realized that when Yanky had felt flustered and insecure about an answer, he read the note and it calmed him. This, indeed, had been the first test since that PTA meeting, so it had never happened before. As he reflected on the incident, the rebbi was grateful that he had not confronted Yanky during the test, and he was sorry he had suspected him wrongly.

He had been very close to embarrassing Yanky in front of his classmates, but he had restrained his initial impulse. Since then, Rabbi Perlman has written many notes to other parents and watched their sons blossom into wonderful talmidim. (Illuminations of the Maggid)

Reprinted from the Parshas Bo 5783 email of The Weekly Vort.

The Spiritual Power of One Simple Jew

Prior to Horav Yisrael Salanter's public emergence as the pre-eminent founder of the mussar movement, he lived quietly in Memel, Germany, with an idea, an idea that would transform the Jewish world. His innovation was to focus on mussar also. In addition to studying Gemorah, Jews should also work on their middos, character traits, refining and honing them, so that they would become better people, better Jews.

A Concept Not Accepted at that Time by the Yeshiva World

At that juncture in time, the mussar concept was not accepted in the yeshivah world. He needed to establish a yeshivah whose guiding principles would include the study of mussar in its curriculum. Unfortunately, his dream did not coincide with the reality of finding an appropriate venue and supporting such an endeavor. Obtaining a physical structure was at best difficult. One day, a Jewish carpenter in Memel, a simple, unlearned man who had heard of Rav Yisrael's plight, made him an offer: "I will give the Rav a small room to be used for his yeshivah. I will make tables and chairs for the students to study. This room could serve as the cornerstone of his honor's yeshivah."

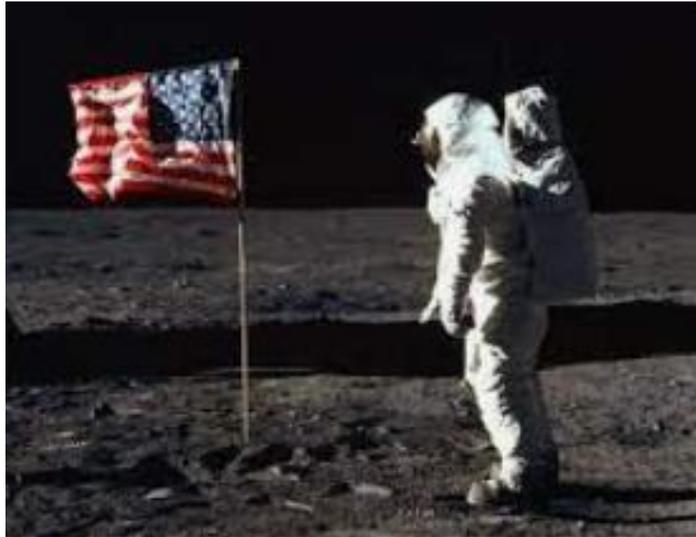
Indeed, that little room, provided to him through the good graces of this carpenter, was the foundation of his yeshivah, upon which the mussar movement was founded. We are all aware that the mussar movement transformed the yeshivah/Jewish world. It changed the way we think and the way we act, enhancing our interpersonal relationships and, ultimately, our avodas hakodesh, service to the Almighty.

The Simple but Powerful Gift of the Carpenter

Rav Yisrael once commented, "What did that carpenter really give?" A small room with some simple furniture. Nonetheless, all of the Toras ha'mussar which exists in the world is in his z'chus, merit! (This was expressed 170 years ago. The amount has since increased exponentially.) Every mussar shmuess, ethical discourse, will be for him a source of spiritual reward for posterity. Every mussar thought, innovation, inspiration is built upon his meagre foundation: a small room and some

furniture. All of this is because he lived in Memel, heard about the need and took action. His simple act of kindness transformed the world!

One should never put down even the smallest, most insignificant entity, especially a person. The mussar movement taught us the significance of actions which appear to be insignificant.



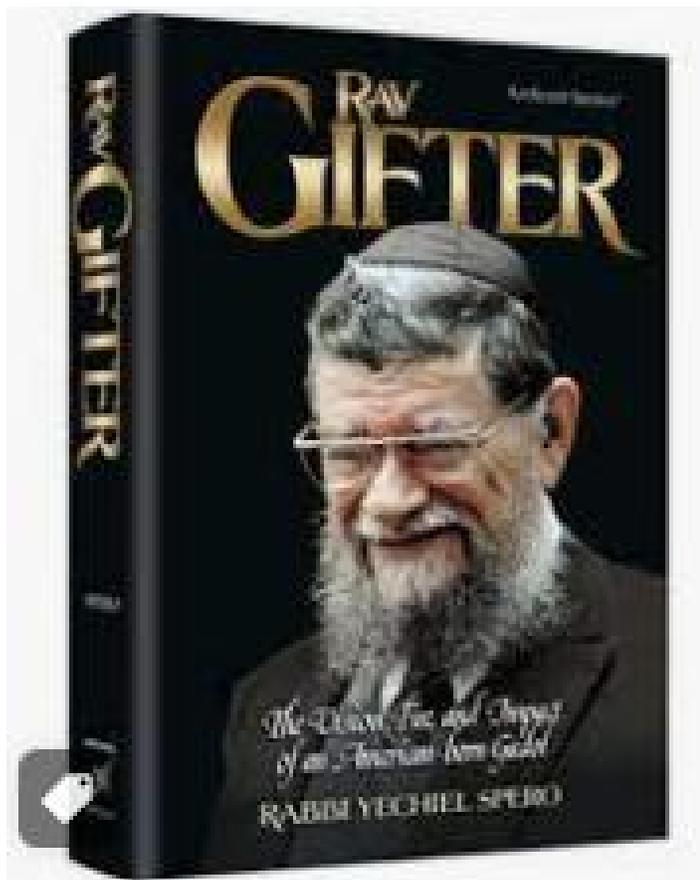
When astronaut Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, he stepped out of his space capsule and made the first human step on the moon. His quote at the time was immortalized, “That’s one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind.” We often go through life thinking, “I am just a cog in a large machine. What contribution can I make? What can I do that will change the world? What can a little guy like me achieve?” The carpenter in Memel made one small step. It altered the lives of countless Jews.

Three aspiring yeshivah bachurimin Baltimore, Maryland, wanted to go to Europe to study in yeshivah. It was prior to World War II. At the time, they had no reason to believe that learning Torah in Europe would ever be a problem. Their desire to learn was great. One impediment prevented them from realizing their dream: money. They had already been accepted—two had been admitted to Telshe, and one to Slabodka.

Money was tight in America. Jews who observed Shabbos had an even greater challenge. Yet, some yechidim, individuals, were willing to take that “one step” for Yiddishkeit. A Jewish grocer in Baltimore, Philip/Uri Gundersheimer, had, despite tremendous financial pressure, refused to remain open on Shabbos, even during the depression years.

He came forward and undertook the responsibility to pay for all expenses incurred by the three young men. They went to yeshivah all because a simple Jew

took that first step. Philip Gundersheimer died in 1943, at the age of ninety-five years old. He never did see his investment achieve complete fruition. Surely now, ensconced in Gan Eden receiving his just reward, he is unaware of what his one step accomplished.



The three young men were: Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, Telshe Rosh Yeshivah, who transformed the lives of thousands of yeshivah bachurim; Horav Aharon Paperman, zl, who, while serving as an army chaplain, inspired thousands of Jewish soldiers. This was followed by rabbanusin Plainfield, New Jersey, a principalship in Scranton, Pennsylvania, being Executive Director of Telshe Yeshivah and Director of Chinuch Atzmai; and Rav Mendel Poliakoff, zl, a Rav in Baltimore.

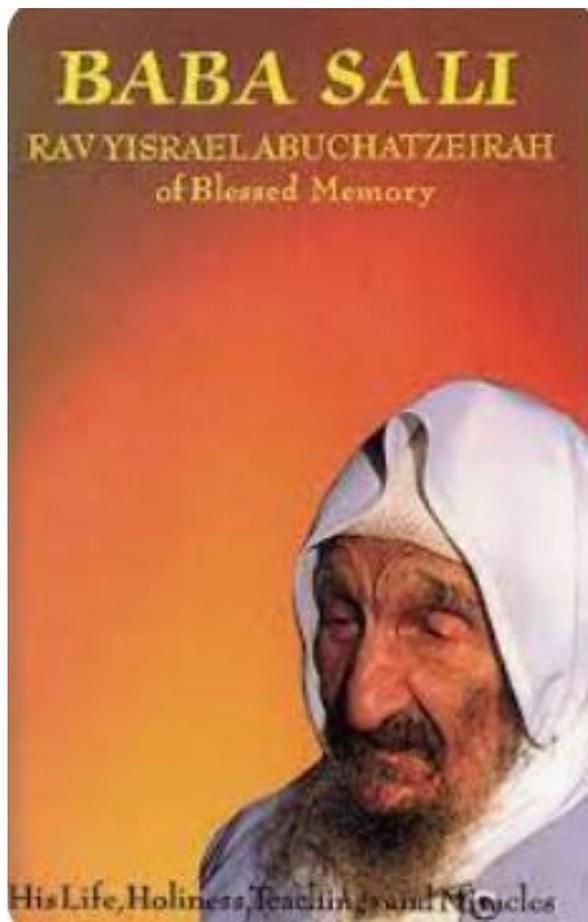
It is our task to act. Hashem determines the significance of our actions. One never knows.

Reprinted from the Parshas Vaeira 5783 edition of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum's Peninim on the Torah.

Story #1311

In the Rocking Chair

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles<
editor@ascentofsafed.com>



Joshua [Dr. Yehoshua Ritchie] and I [his wife, Liliane] were privileged to hear the extraordinary story of a special friend, who had surreal interactions with Baba Sali.

Do you think angels are ethereal beings that are very rarely seen in our world? I have known angels in human form – they are the gentlest, most humble, deep, loving and caring human beings ever encountered in our busy, anxious, pragmatic world. Perhaps you have also met some, without realizing who they were.

I was fortunate to meet one of these angelic beings a number of years ago in Los Angeles. We both felt blessed with an immediate connection. A beautiful woman in every way, Rifka [not her real name] radiates an aura of grace, kindness

and beauty. Her voice is melodious and comforting, her words filled with sparkling, inspired, unique healing thoughts and ideas. Her laughter is catchy, communicating a joyful lightness of spirit. In her company, life seems like an exciting adventure filled with potential yet to be discovered.

Before we met, life had not been easy for her. She had learned to survive an abusive husband, had given birth to five children, divorced and, being strong and courageous, she lovingly raised her children on her own until they were grown. Then a spiritual awakening turned her life around. She focused in her search for what is the loftiest, most pure, loving and meaningful purpose in her life.

Drawing Closer to Her Jewish Spiritual Roots

With our help and encouragement as well as of a soul brother who was going through a similar spiritual process, she began to draw closer to her Jewish spiritual roots. Loving to read about our great *tzadikim* (holy spiritual masters), Rifka felt especially drawn to the revered father [“*Baba*”] of Sephardic Jewry, the **Baba Sali**.

Unexpectedly, to Rifka’s delight, people began to bring her photographs of Baba Sali, even though they knew nothing about the deepening soul connection with him that she felt. And more photographs kept coming her way from different sources.

Rifka came to settle here in Jerusalem alone with \$450 in her pocket, her entire savings. She was welcomed at the family home of our son David and wife Natanella. Roaming about Jerusalem, she was thrilled and awed by the holiness of the atmosphere of this city.

When Rifka’s money had dwindled down to \$20, she gave it away to someone who seemed to need it more than her. The next day, an unexpected check arrived for her in the mail for \$20.

Took a Bus Ride to the Desert Town Where the Baba Sali Lived

As soon as she could, Rifka took the bus with her spiritual soul brother to the desert town of Netivot to meet with Baba Sali. When she arrived at his home, she was quite disappointed to hear that he does not see women at any time. Her soul brother reassured her that Baba Sali was just as effective in his connection and blessings towards women when he received their written request. So Rifka wrote down her request, gave it to the *gabbai* (personal attendant) and took a seat in the waiting room.

There, she began to enjoy listening to the stories of the other people in the room. She was fascinated to hear of the healings which had occurred for them after they had connected with their holy master Baba Sali.

At one point, she asked for directions to the bathroom and walked her way through some meandering corridors. Suddenly, she saw an open door, peeked inside

-- and there was Baba Sali [whom she recognized from her photos,] sitting in deep meditative study, waiting for the next person who needed his blessing.

Rifka just stood there transfixed, hardly daring to look at him. How long? It seemed a moment touching eternity. Then someone came bustling about and re-directed her to the bathroom.

Thereafter, Rifka felt that Baba Sali knew who she was, that he had directed her to him so that she wouldn't be too disappointed at not being able to see him in person.

Found a Small Apartment and a Job as Cook

A few days after receiving Baba Sali's blessings, two of them were fulfilled when Rifka found a small apartment in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem, as well as work as a caterer for a *yeshivah*. She couldn't bear to give less than quality meals for the students, even though there was very little funding from the Yeshivah. She even went into debt buying the right kind of food for them.

Aside from that, her kitchen was open to many young spiritually searching souls wandering through Jerusalem. Whomever she touched was uplifted and comforted.

In the meantime, the beloved master of loving kindness, [divine inspiration and Torah scholarship,] Baba Sali, left this world in 1984. Many hundreds of thousands of Jews mourned his departure. He had been fasting most of his life, yet he lived until 94 [1] years of age. He left behind an awesome legacy: his radiance of loving kindness, of powerful strength, humility, purity, clarity and wisdom, through his ceaseless, absolutely committed devotion to God and man. The countless miracles he engendered throughout his life were uplifting and strengthening the entire nation in many ways.

Her Helper was Looking a Bit Bewildered

Almost a year later, as Rifka was returning home from an errand, she found her helper, a simple, humble and devoted man who was doing the food shopping for her, standing there looking a bit bewildered.

"Rifka," he said empathically, "you really should lock your door."

"Why?" she responded. "There is nothing much here worth stealing. Besides, somebody might need a place to eat and rest."

"Nevertheless, I really think you should lock your door."

"Why?"

"I found someone sitting here in your rocking chair."

"So?"

"He was an old man, all dressed in white."

"That doesn't surprise me. There are all kinds of mystical souls roaming around here. You don't need to be worried."

Rifka's helper looked pensive and awed. He didn't say any more.

A few days later, Rifka was invited to attend a *Hilulah* (celebration: [to honor]) Baba Sali. Rifka brought her humble helper along. When they arrived at the home that was hosting the celebration they saw a portrait of Baba Sali hanging on the wall at the entrance. The moment Rifka's helper looked at the portrait, he pointed to it. "That's him! The old man who was sitting in your rocking chair just a few days ago! That's him!"

Relaying a Positive Message

Why wasn't Rifka privileged to see Baba Sali herself? My guess is that Baba Sali knew that if he would appear to her, she would have fainted on the spot! So, he chose to appear to someone else and through this he was able to relay the message that he was with her, very much aware of the holy work she was doing.

Soon after, Rifka found her soul mate, a physician. She and her beloved husband now [2014?] live in a beautiful home in Jerusalem. Rifka works as a counselor at Refuah Institute [see Source note below]. How could it be otherwise? She counsels from a loving heart, a high spiritual vision, and a soul-healing inner strength.

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*Source* : Excerpted and adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from a longer, sweeter article by Mrs **Liliane Ritchie** published on *JewishOutlook.com* in 2014 .

**Dr. Joshua Ritchie** is the founder and director of the Refuah Institute in Jerusalem, a non-profit orthodox-Jewish center which provides training in therapy techniques, life-coaching, marriage and youth counselling based within the Jewish halacha. - *Wikipedia*

His wife, Liliane--a talented artist, mother of their 5 children, a counselor, teacher and author--assists in all the Refuah projects. - *Aish.com*.

*Biographical*

*note:*

**Rabbi Yisrael Abuhatzeira** [1890 - 4 Shvat 1984] known as **Baba Sali**, was born in Tafilalet Morocco, to one of Jewry's most illustrious families. From a young age he was renowned as a sage, miracle maker and master kabbalist. In 1964 he moved to Eretz Yisrael, eventually settling in 1970 in the Southern development town he made famous, Netivot, and where, since 1984, his tomb has become one of Israel's most visited pilgrimage sites. A number of collections of stories featuring him have been published, including at least two in English.

*Connection*: Thursday (Jan. 26), 4 Shvat on the Jewish calendar is the *hilulah*-yahrzeit of Baba Sali.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Bo 5783 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed in Israel.*

# The Delayed Mazel Tov!



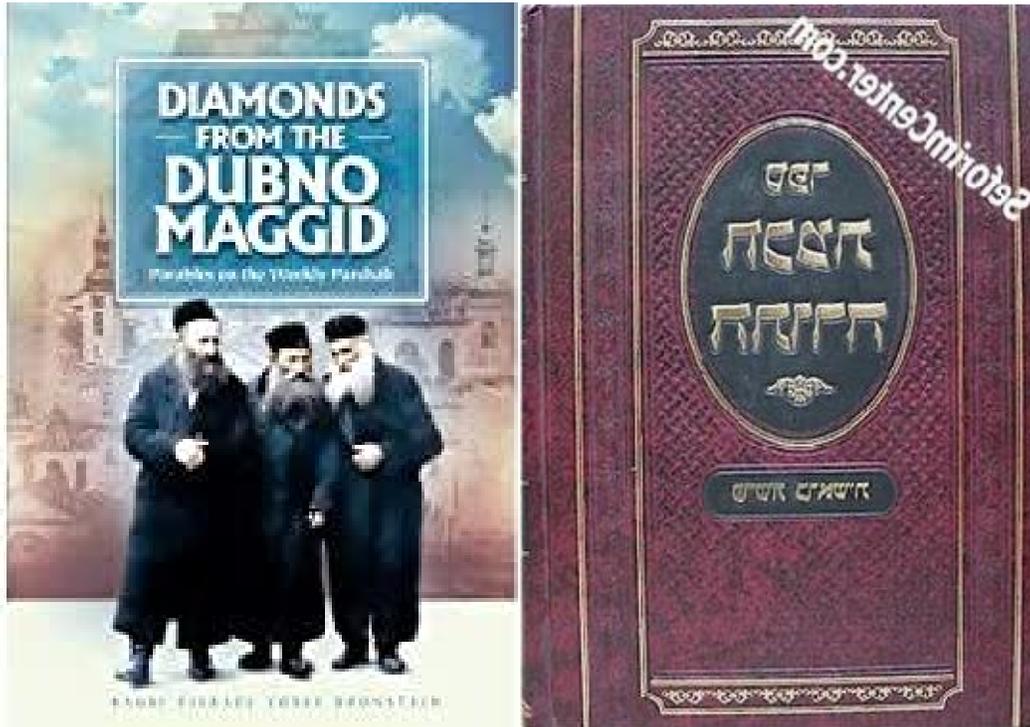
Rav Yitzchok Hutner, *zt”l*, Rosh Yeshivah of Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin, developed a close relationship with countless Talmidim. They would call their Rebbe, the Rosh Yeshivah, to share good news with him, and he would rejoice like a father.

On one such occasion, a Talmid called to report that his wife had just given birth to a baby girl. Uncharacteristically, Rav Hutner responded, “Yes, please call me back in fifteen minutes.”

When the Talmid called back, Rav Hutner said, “When you called earlier, I had a visitor with me who still does not have any children after many years of marriage. Had I rejoiced over the birth of your child in front of him, it might have caused him pain over his situation. Now, I am alone, and I can respond properly. Mazel Tov!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bo 5783 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefillah*

# The Importance of Stopping In Order to Help Another Jew



## Book on the Wisdom of the Dubno Maggid and the Sefer Chochmat HaTorah by Rabbi Shlomo Klugner

The Dubno Maggid (Rabbi Yaakov Kranz, 1741-1804) was once walking in the street during a cold day in the winter, and he saw a poor blind man wearing tattered clothing. A young child was holding his hand and leading him along, helping him collect Tzedakah.

People passed right by them, and no one paid too much attention to them, or bothered to ask about their welfare or check if they had anything to eat or drink. The Dubno Maggid saw them. His heart filled with compassion and anguish because of their pain.

The Maggid stopped and asked them what their story was. The blind man was downtrodden. He sighed deeply and he did not respond. The young child that was leading him told the Dubno Maggid that this blind man is his father. Since his mother passed away, they are living in a cold damp cellar and they are on their way to the city's soup kitchen for the poor, to get a hot meal.

The Dubno Maggid felt terrible for them and took them to his home. He served them a hot meal and arranged a comfortable and warm room for them to stay in. The meal warmed their hearts, and they thanked the Dubno Maggid for his kindness. While they were talking, the Maggid asked the young boy what he was learning in Yeshivah, but the boy replied that he wasn't currently in Yeshivah. He explained that he had to be home to help his father and go out with him to collect Tzedakah, that he didn't have any time for anything else.

The Dubno Maggid asked them, "Would you agree to live here with me?" and he offered to provide a warm room and hot meals for them. Then he added that if they agreed, the child will also have the opportunity to go learn Torah in Yeshivah. The father hesitated to respond, but his son's eyes sparkled with joy. After a quick discussion between the two of them, the father agreed to try it for a little while, so that his young son could go learn Torah.

### **The Child Made Great Strides in Learning**

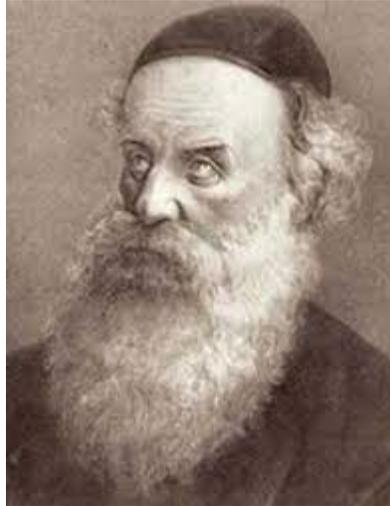
The Dubno Maggid went and enrolled the young boy in Yeshivah, where the child proved himself to be wise and insightful, and he began to make great strides in his learning. They stayed by the Dubno Maggid for a long while, and even after his father passed away, he continued to learn in the Yeshivah under the instruction of the Maggid.

The child soon developed a great reputation as a distinguished Talmid Chacham. After some time, he got married and was soon appointed to be the Rav of the city of Brody. This boy became the Gaon Rav Shlomo Kluger, zt"l (1785-1869), who was amongst the greatest leaders of his generation, and his classic Seforim helped form the foundation of many Halachic opinions. This all happened because the Dubno Maggid noticed the potential in a young child, and he decided to stop what he was doing and try to make a difference!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bo 5783 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefillah*

# Recognizing the Alter Rebbe's Greatness

By Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber



When the Alter Rebbe's (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi) future in-laws took him as a chossan for their daughter, their endearment towards him was unlimited. Regardless of his young age, he was considered one of the greatest scholars of the time.

Their admiration slowly eroded, however, upon observing that his way of serving Hashem (which was based on the teachings of the Shaloh HaKodesh), and especially his davening at length, was foreign to them. When he returned from Mezeritch and lived publicly as a chossid, their feelings for him turned to anger and hostility.

## **The Mother-in-Law's Halachic Question**

I am unaware if this story took place before he became a chossid or afterwards. One erev Yom Tov, the Alter Rebbe's mother-in-law had a halachic question on the meat being prepared for their meal. As was customary, she thought to send one of her helpers to ask the Rov the question, however, he wasn't available then.

A few moments later she thought, "While I personally don't understand my son-in-law's ways, everyone says he is a true Torah scholar. Since time is of the essence, I will ask him the same question, and if he says it is kosher, surely

the Rov would say so as well. This way, I will be able to save some precious time by preparing it earlier, especially as there is a lot to do this erev Shabbos.”

Taking the actual piece of meat in question, she knocked on the door to the room where he was learning, entered, and asked him the question she had. After hearing the question and examining the piece of meat he said, “It is one hundred percent kosher without any doubt.”

### **The Mother-in-Law Just Wanted to Make Certain**

Delighted with his answer, she told the cook to begin preparing the meal using the rest of the meat. However, when her helper arrived, without mentioning that her son-in-law already gave a decision, she sent him to the Rov with the original piece just to make certain.

Sometime later, when the dish was almost ready, the messenger returned with the Rov’s decision: “It is treif.”

She was dumbfounded! Not only were her son-in-law’s customs and ways of conduct strange to them, but he was evidently an ignoramus as well. How he was able to fool so many people into thinking that he was a scholar of the highest caliber was beyond her. Here he says there is no question what-so-ever, it is kosher beyond a doubt and the respected Rov declared it not kosher.

Her distress turned to bitterness as she unleashed her anger at her son-in-law: “Not only can’t you do anything in business; you don’t know Jewish law either! Why are we supporting you all these years? So, you can sit and dream as if you know it all?! You just made my whole kitchen treif!”

### **The Rov Once Again Reviewed the Shaalah (Question)**

Hearing her tirade, the messenger quietly slipped out of the house and rushed back to the Rov, informing him of the storm brewing in Reb Yehudah Leib Segal’s house. The Rov once again reviewed the shaalah and came to the same conclusion that the animal was treif. However, not wanting to cause friction among others, especially as he regarded the Alter Rebbe in the highest esteem, he decided to discuss it with another Rov.

After a thorough review, they both concluded that it was unequivocally treif. When the second Rov asked the first Rov what bothered him so much that he would spend why so much time on an obvious halachah, the Rov replied, “Reb Yehudah Segal’s illustrious son-in-law paskened that it is kosher, so now there is a battle brewing in the house of the Rosh HaKahel!”

“So let him come and explain his reason to us,” said the second Rov.

“No!” replied the first Rov. “I heard many scholarly explanations from him, and I also stood by his open window many nights listening to his learning. He is definitely greater than I, so it is only right that I go to him.”

The two Rabbonim walked together to Reb Yehudah's house, and when they arrived at the door were shocked as they overheard the mother-in-law's emotional tirade that was still going on. Knocking on the door they waited outside until one of the helpers opened the door and informed her of her distinguished guests Mrs. Segal greeted them respectfully and asked in bewilderment why the honored Rabbonim had come and if they needed anything. They informed her that they had come to discuss the shaalah of hers with her knowledgeable son-in-law.

"Wonderful!" she exclaimed. "Maybe when he is informed of his terrible mistake, he will finally listen to reason and change his ways. I kept the food in the pots on the side, so my husband will see what our son-in-law did."

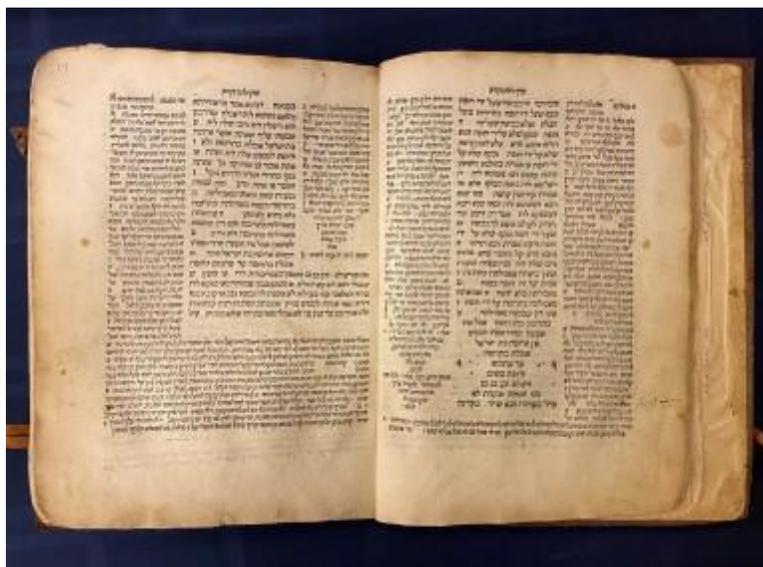
### **Asked on How He Based His Pasak**

When the Alter Rebbe was told that the Rabbonim had come and would like to discuss the question with him, he came out of his room and greeted them warmly. They asked him, "On what basis did you pasken that the animal is kosher, as the Shach clearly writes that if this is seen on in an animal, it is treif?"

"I beg to differ," responded the Alter Rebbe. "It is the Shach himself who paskens that it is kosher," and he then began to review the Shach verbatim. As the Rabbonim listened, they immediately recognized their mistake in the meaning of the Shach's words and told the Alter Rebbe in amazement that he was correct. In order to show that they meant it and weren't just saying it to make peace in the house, they requested that she bring them a small portion of the dish in question, and they ate from it before leaving.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va'eira 5783 email of Rabbi Avtzon's Weekly Story.*

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*Babylonian Talmud Tractate Kiddushim, printed in Constantinople, circa 1510*