

# SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS BO 5784

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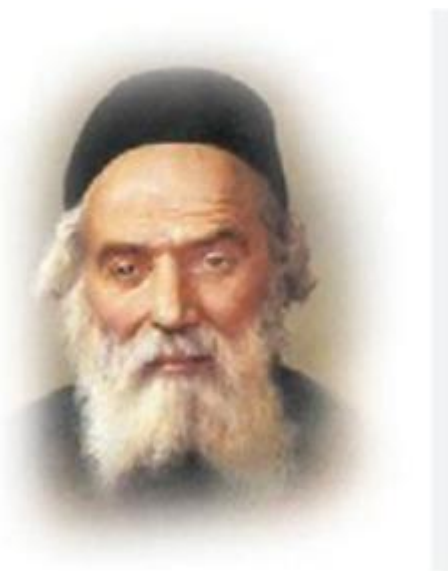
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## The Chofetz Chaim and The Religious Doctor

Based on a talk by Rav Yaakov Galinsky



**The Chofetz Chaim**

There was a religious Doctor who lived in Germany. He was particular on every Halacha in the Shulchan Aruch, he had his daily Shiurei Torah and truly made a Kiddush Hashem with his fine behavior. One day he took off vacation and decided to visit the Yeshivos in Lithuania.

He was enthralled by what he saw. Teenagers and young men sitting all day in the Beis Hamedrash completely immersed in their studies. They were studying

Masechtos he had never learned. Slabodka, Mir, Telz, Kaminetz, Grodno, Kletzk, Ponevez and Radin.

He was very disturbed and decided to go and speak to the Chafetz Chaim. “Rebbi,” he asked, “will I merit Olam Haba?”

“Every Jew has a place in Olam Haba,” answered the Chafetz Chaim.

### **“I Feel Like a Dwarf Against those Giants”**

“But what sort of place will I have,” he asked. “Until now I was happy with my life. I was sure I had done my best. A religious Jew, a doctor, keeping Mitzvos properly, and helping people as best as I could. I attend Shiurei Torah, give time and energy for community affairs, I was sure I had a front row in Olam Haba. But now when I see the world of the Yeshivos, those that have given everything they have to be able to study day and night, I’m not sure if I’ll make it to one of the back rows. I feel like a dwarf against those giants.”

The Chafetz Chaim looked at him and said, “you know, its possible you’ll be my neighbor in Gan Eden!” Him, the neighbor of the Chafetz Chaim? But the Chafetz Chaim wasn’t a comedian; the Chafetz Chaim was a person who spoke the truth! How, the Chafetz Chaim, with his vast Torah knowledge, the Chafetz Chaim with his great charity and kindness, the Chafetz Chaim with so many Sefarim he authored. How?

“Let me explain,” said the Chafetz Chaim. “The source of what I am saying is in the Torah. The Passuk in Bereishis tells us that the Etz Hachaim the tree of life was in the center of Gan Eden. The tree of life refers to the eternal life of Olam Haba. What difference does it make if it was in the center or the side?

### **Your Journey is Similar to My Journey**

“The answer is, the center of a circle is unique, no matter which point of the circle you are, you are always exactly the same distance from the center point. Your journey to Gan Eden isn’t a longer journey then mine. I was born in Lithuania, educated in Vilna, had the opportunity to meet Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, Hashem gave me the idea to write many Sefarim on Halacha and Mussar, He gave me the tools, the potential, the talent and the opportunities, so I grew to be the Chafetz Chaim.”

“You were born in Germany and was educated with the education of ‘Torah im Derech Eretz’ - Torah with working, and you grew to be a religious Doctor, particular to keep all Mitzvos properly, spending your time doing Chessed and attending Shiurei Torah. Everyone is expected to maximize his talents and his potentials.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shemos 5784 email of Inspired by a Story by Rabbi Dovid Caro.*

# The Old German's Confession

An old German man was feeling guilty about something he had done, so he decided to go to Confession. He said, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I feel terrible because during World War II, I hid a Jew in my attic."

The priest said, "But that's not a sin! I wouldn't feel bad about that if I were you."

"But I made him agree to pay me 50 Marks for every week he stayed."

The priest said, "Well, I admit that it wasn't the noblest thing to do, charging the man to save his life, but you did save his life, after all, and that is a good thing. Don't worry about it too much; G-d forgives."

The man said, "Oh thank you, Father, that eases my mind. I have only one more question to ask you: Do I have to tell him the war is over?"

*Reprinted from the Parshat Shemot 5784 email of Chabad of Great Neck, NY.*

## Always On Duty

By Rabbi Sholem Dovber Avtzon

Reb Zev Nelkin related that there are many Lubavitchers who always have a pair of tefillin with them. This way, in case they meet a Jew during the day, who for whatever reason didn't put on tefillin that day, would have the opportunity to do so.

The following story was related to him by a fellow doctor, who heard it from a Lubavitcher who is one of his patients. That patient said to him, "One day I was traveling to New Jersey to meet one of my acquaintances. Sometimes when we meet, there is an elderly Jew (in his early eighties) at the meeting.

When I was a few minutes before the Verrazano Bridge, I glanced at the seat next to me and was alarmed to see that my tefillin was not there. After a moment of nervousness, I remembered that on the way I had stopped off at Bingos to buy some items. Evidently, I had taken my tefillin into the store, and most probably had left them there.

I called Bingo and they confirmed that they had it and said to me, "You have nothing to worry about. There is a Lubavitcher from Crown Heights by the counter and we will give it to him, and the two of you can make arrangements to meet." However, I replied, "Please hold it as I will be there in fifteen to twenty minutes." After retrieving them, I continued on my way to the meeting.

It happened to be that the elderly man was present, so I asked him, if he would put on tefillin.

To my delight, this time the man replied, “While I have not accepted your offer previously, I will do so today.”

I helped him put them on and recited the Shema and was about to begin the meeting. Very shortly afterwards the elderly Yid had a massive heart attack and passed away instantly.

[Zev told me, it sounded as if his doctor friend meant that it happened almost immediately after his patient, who related this story, had removed the tefillin from that Jew, however, perhaps he meant some minutes or hours later.]

I was devastated. However, the only solace I had was that because I had returned to Bingo, this Jew merited to put on tefillin at least once in his lifetime – (perhaps even the final act of his life). I knew for sure he won't be considered a Jew who had never worn tefillin in his life. Although it is possible that he may have put on Tefillin on other occasions.

*Reprinted from Rabbi Avtzon's Weekly Story email for the week of Parshas Shemos.*

# How One Mitzva Can Illuminate A Life

**By Rabbi Sholem Dovber Avtzon**

Reb Yosef Gajer related that the previous week he was in South Burlington, Vermont visiting his daughter, who together with her husband, are the Shluchim to Northwest, Vermont.

On Shabbos I went with my son-in-law to Rabbi Raskin's shul , which is an hour's walk away in Burlington, Vermont, on the campus of the University of Vermont.

One of the regulars who davens there is an individual, to whom Shabbos and the weekdays are similar. He only put on his tallis, but not his tefillin. Reb Yosef continued, “I had gently asked him on weekdays in my previous visits if he would like to put on tefillin, but his answer always was, Thank you, but no.”

This Sunday morning at the conclusion of davening I approached him and said, “Mr. so-and-so, may I ask of you a favor?”

“Of course,” was his reply.

### **Put on Tefillin on Behalf of My Son**

“My son is having an operation this Tuesday, the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, in New York City. My request is, would you please put on tefillin and say a prayer on his behalf.

“Yes,” was the reply and the man took out his tallis a second time, put it on, and then he donned the pair of tefillin. When he concluded saying his prayer he said, “Please inform me after the operation how your son is doing.”

“With pleasure,” I replied.

Reb Yosef returned home to Brooklyn to be with his son, so he asked his daughter and son-in-law to inform that gentleman in person when the operation is over. [May his recovery continue going well until Hashem grants him a complete refuah.]

On Friday during my conversation with my daughter I asked her how that gentleman received the news and how he is in general.

“Tatty that is interesting that you are asking me that now. Right now, my husband is Kashering his kitchen!”

*Reprinted from Rabbi Avtzon's Weekly Story email for the week of Parshas Shemos.*

## **A Bashert Shidduch**

**By Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Sonnenfeld**

R' Shleimke was already in the Bialystoker succah, sitting at the table with Yakov Yosef. R' Binyamin [the father of Yakov Yosef] was a great talmid chochom, and had a keen sense. He immediately noted the rough and calloused hands of R' Gershon, guessing that he was a mere laborer.

He turned to R' Shleimke with a look of concern, expecting an explanation. Could it be that R' Shleimke was suggesting that Yakov Yosef marry the daughter of a mere laborer? She seemed exceptionally modest and refined, but still... the daughter of a laborer?

R' Shleimke conveniently avoided looking at R' Binyamin, and quickly suggested that the men sit at a small table in one corner of the succah and the women go to the other side. R' Binyamin minced no words and came straight to the point. “R' Gershon, I see from your hands that you are a working man. What type of work do you do?”

R' Gershon replied that he was a carpenter. It was apparent from R' Binyamin's facial expression that he was not pleased. Before he could voice his

objection to the proposed shidduch, his son, Yakov Yosef, suddenly spoke up and asked, “Aren’t you the carpenter that I saw building old R’ Meir’s succah?”



R’ Gershon replied, “Yes, I finished R’ Meir’s succah two days ago.”

Yakov Yosef turned to his father excitedly, “Do you know who this man is? This is R’ Gershon the carpenter, the one who goes around before every Succos and helps the old and the sick build their succos for free!”

It was completely out of line and unacceptable for a prospective young man to speak out during a conversation between his father and his potential future father-in-law. R’ Binyamin Beinisch realized, however, that if his son had done so, it was of significance.

### **An Honest Workman – But Still a Mere Workman**

R’ Binyamin Beinisch had heard of R’ Gershon, the carpenter – an honest workman who built others’ succos for free. Nonetheless, R’ Gershon was still a mere carpenter and this was a question of his son’s marriage! R’ Binyamin then asked R’ Gershon why, if he was not so rich, did he squander the most profitable time by building succos for free. Wouldn’t it be more practical, he said, to charge for building succos?

R’ Gershon agreed, however, he stated that the most practical thing a Jew could do is the will of Hashem. R’ Binyamin was beginning to realize that he had been wrong to judge this simple-looking carpenter so quickly. This was no ordinary carpenter and no ordinary Jew.

They then launched into a discussion of a particularly difficult section of Gemara. All the men participated, however, soon R’ Shleimke – who was not

particularly learned – dropped out of the discussion. As the discussion became more complex, R' Gershon also fell silent. When R' Binyamin and his son finally concluded the discussion between themselves, R' Binyamin apologized to R' Gershon, "I'm sorry, R' Gershon. My son and I got carried away. I shouldn't have expected that someone who does not have the time to sit and learn all day could follow the discussion."

### **Offers His Thoughts on the Talmudical Difficulty**

R' Gershon replied, "I followed the discussion quite well. It is a particularly difficult passage and both you and your son have obviously learned it many times and struggled with it for many hours. I do not pretend to be a talmid chochom, but since you have mistaken my silence for ignorance, perhaps you will allow me to offer my thoughts on the points which you seem to have trouble with."

R' Binyamin was pleasantly surprised to hear R' Gershon offer a clear and concise summary of the problem which arose in the Talmudic discussion. He then told R' Gershon, "I will have to talk with my wife before making a decision. But as far as I'm concerned, you would be doing us a great kindness and honor if you allow our Yakov Yosef to marry your Rivka."

He then turned to his son and said, "My son, you should know that if R' Gershon agrees to my request, you will be marrying into one of the finest families in all of Yerushalayim." R' Gershon was embarrassed into silence. The women soon came over, and R' Binyamin's wife had nothing but praise for Rivka.

The next day, scores of talmidei chachomim came to visit R' Gershon in his succah to wish him Mazel Tov on the engagement of his daughter to the son of R' Binyamin Beinish Bialystoker. It was not long before Rivka stood under the chuppah and became the wife of R' Yakov Yosef, one of the most brilliant young talmidei chachomim in all of Yerushalayim.

### **The Reward for Building Sukkos for Free**

The shidduch came about because R' Binyamin Beinish's son suffered a broken engagement and was in a position to accept an offer he would ordinarily have refused; and because of R' Gershon's extraordinary chessed in building succos free of charge for the sick and elderly, which Yakov Yosef pointed out when he recognized R' Gershon as the one who built old R' Meir's succah. And, of course, R' Shleimke [the shadchan's] pressing need for funds to purchase his sukkos needs.... (Jerusalem Gems)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va'eira 5784 email of The Weekly Vort.*

# The Legendary Story of the Maharam Schick



The Maharam [Rabbi Moshe] Schick (1807-1877) as a child and young boy was known not to be very bright. Even when he came to learn in the Yeshiva of Chassam Sofer it was said that whatever he learned one day, he forgot by the next day.

But the Maharam Schick was an extraordinary Masmid and very diligent, he chazered (reviewed) and chazered over and over until Hashem opened his mind and heart and he became one of the leading Gedolim of his generation. So much so, that he remembered his learning by heart.

When testing his students, he would open a Gemarah, put his finger on the right place but wouldn't even look inside. Once in his old age when his eyesight was bad, one of his students wanted to check out his Rebbe and when he wasn't looking, he managed to flip over the page. The Maharam Schick hadn't noticed and he continued looking at his students, with his finger pointing to the right place on the wrong page.

The Maharam Schick used to say, "one doesn't become a Talmid Chacham (Torah scholar) from learning. Becoming a Talmid Chacham is only from Chazarah (review) over and over again.

Once the Kesav Sofer (Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Binyomin Sofer, 1815-1871) and the Maharam Schik were in the same town for health reasons. The Kesav Sofer was busy studying a topic and needed a Tur with the commentary of the Beis Yosef. He asked his attendant to go to the Maharam Schik and ask if he could borrow the Tur.

The Maharam Schik replied that he can't lend him the Sefer, but if he asks his Rebbi, the Kesav Sofer which Siman (chapter) he needs, he is happy to write it down for him. The student returned back shortly after with the correct Siman and the Maharam Schik wrote him the whole thing.



**The Kesav Sofer**

A few days later, the Kesav Sofer came to visit the Maharam Schik and asked him to see the Tur inside. It was then that the Kesav Sofer found out that the Maharam Schik hadn't copied it from a volume because he didn't have the Sefer with him, he had written it completely from memory.

Reb Asher Lemmel Schwarz was a student of the Maharam Schik and used to write his Rebbi's Chiddushei Torah. Once on a journey with his Rebbi, Reb Asher Lemmel was busy writing his Rebbi's Divrei

Torah. As they were traveling the wagon got stuck and turned over. No one was hurt besides Reb Asher Lemmel who injured his hand and had severe pains. So much so, that he couldn't continue writing his Rebbi's Chiddushim.

### **A Comment Made Out of Intense Pain**

Out of such intense pain the young Asher Lemmel made a comment and said, "maybe the Rebbi's words need to be checked out." ( He made this comment out of pain and bitterness that only he was injured on his hand that was busy writing the words of his Rebbi's Torah)

The Maharam Schik looked at him bewildered and said, "When you come up to Heaven, I will come and take you to my Yeshiva in Heaven and you will see and be proven that I learned Torah Lishmah – Torah only for Hashem's sake without any exterior motives."

Many years later Reb Asher Lemmel told this story to his son in law and asked that the story should be repeated at his Levaya as he hopes that

his Rebbe will fulfil his words and come to take him into his Yeshiva.

In his final illness the Maharam Schick's body was blown up from head to toe and he suffered intense pain. He turned to his students and said, "I am begging Hashem to be able to stay alive, even if I will remain bedridden like now and unable to do anything, I am willing to lie like this and be able to say once a day just the first Passuk of Shema Yisrael till Echad!"

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shemos 5784 email of Inspired by a Story by Rabbi*

# The Gabbai

By Shmuel Botnick



A keen understanding of human nature played a role in Rav Nota Greenblatt's success rate. He once learned of a man who had married and then quickly left town after draining his wife's financial resources. He did not give her a get.

The man then moved to another large city and did the same thing, though using a different name. Thus, two women were left halachically bound to a man whose whereabouts — and name — were a complete mystery.

Rav Nota shared this story with a few bachurim and then his voice took on a triumphant tone. “I managed to get two gittin out of the guy!” he said proudly.

“Two gittin? But how did you find him?”

Rav Nota explained: “I figured that after he left, he’s likely to move on to another city with a Jewish community and try the same shtick. I also heard that in the previous cities in which he lived, he had served as the gabbai of a shul. I therefore assumed that, wherever his next destination was, he’s likely to be a gabbai there as well.”

Rav Nota smiled. “A gabbai bleibt a gabbai,” he said. “A gabbai remains a gabbai. “Over the next few months, in whichever city I found myself, I would ask, ‘Is there a new gabbai in town?’

“Finally, I asked this question to the rabbi of a certain shul and he said yes! There is a new gabbai in town and, not only that, he is engaged to be married to a woman from the community. The rabbi even told me that he was set to be the mesader kiddushin at their wedding.”

Rav Nota expressed his fears as to who this individual might be and the rabbi arranged a meeting. Sure enough, Rav Nota guessed right. This was the man he had been looking for. Rav Nota prevented the upcoming marriage from happening while simultaneously managing to procure consent to write divorce documents for the two previous wives as well.

Upon completing the story, Rav Nota smiled again. “A gabbai is a gabbai wherever he may be!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eira 5784 email of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table.  
Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “Rav Nota – The Story of Rav Nota Greenblatt”  
by Shmuel Botnick.*

# Acting Chosen

**By Aharon Spetner**

“Basya,” said Morah Esty, right after the school bell rang at the end of the day. “I want you to be in charge of the school’s submission to the Tu B’shvat project this year.”

Basya gasped. It was always an eighth grader who was in charge of the Tu B’shvat project - maybe sometimes a seventh grader who was chosen to lead the school’s project for the statewide Tu B’shvat event. The event was attended by thousands of girls from Beis Yaakovs all over New York and pictures of each project

were printed in all of the frum newspapers. Not only that, but the girls who made the most creative project would win a lifetime supply of bukser!



**Illustrated by Miri Weinreb**

“Me?” asked Basya. “But I’m only in fifth grade.”

“You are a very creative girl and you work really well with other people,” Morah Esty said. “We think that you have what it takes to create an amazing and beautiful project.

Basya couldn’t believe her ears. She profusely thanked Morah Esty for the opportunity and rushed off to ask her friends to join the project. They all agreed to meet at Basya’s house that night after supper to plan it.

That night, the four girls gathered in the Greenbaum dining room and started working on their ideas.

“How about we make a tree out of plaster, with all sorts of actual fruit hanging from it?” Basya suggested.

“Ooh, I like that,” Channie said. “But what if instead of just fruit, it’s actual baskets of fruit?”

“I like it,” replied Basya. “But the tree will have to be much bigger than I was imagining.”

### **“We Can Actually Have Real Running Water in the Creek!”**

“I have an idea!” Malky said excitedly. “Let’s have the tree, surrounded with grass, next to a creek. My father can probably help us install a pump so we can actually have real running water in the creek!”

“Oh. My. Kneidlach.” Rochel said. “That is the most a-may-zing idea I ever heard.”

“Let’s start sketching our ideas,” Basya said, pulling out some paper and crayons. “This way we’ll have a good idea of exactly what we are going to make.”

As the girls began drawing, Basya suddenly remembered something.

“We should ask Devorah if she wants to join. She’s the best artist in the class and she doesn’t have so many friends. She’d really appreciate being included.

“That’s an amazing idea,” said Rochel.

So, Basya went to the phone and called Devorah.

### **Devorah Joins the Project**

“I’d love to join,” Devorah said shyly. “I’ll be over in a few minutes.”

When Devorah arrived, the girls showed her the ideas they had so far.

“Why does it have to be so complicated?” asked Devorah. “Why can’t we just do a pretty poster with glitter and yarn tassels?”

“Because this is going to be seen by thousands of girls,” Rochel explained. “Last year the eighth graders from Beis Yaakov Ro’eh Bashoshanim had a remote-controlled helicopter that dropped fruit which parachuted down over everyone’s heads - and they didn’t even win the contest!”

Devorah frowned. “I don’t know. We’re just fifth graders. It feels like too much work.”

### **A Lifetime Supply of Bukser**

The other girls looked up from their papers at Devorah.

“Maybe she’s right,” Basya said after a moment. “And what would we do with a lifetime supply of bukser? Who likes that stuff anyway?”

The girls looked at their drawings and started to wonder if they should just let the eighth graders do it as usual.

“Girls,” came the voice of Basya’s mother from the doorway to the kitchen. “Can I talk to you for a minute?”

“Okay,” Basya said glumly.

“In this week’s Parsha we learn about the makkos. And if you notice, even though all of Mitzrayim suffered, the Bnei Yisroel did not. Not one Jewish animal died. Not a single hailstone fell in goshen. And while everyone else in Mitzrayim suffered from the terrible boils of makkas shchin, not a single Yid got even as much as a pimple.

### **We Are the Am Hanivchar**

“Now you might have not thought about that, because why should the Bnei Yisroel suffer from the makkos? But the Torah goes out of the way to say that Hashem separated us from the Mitzrim for the makkos. This is because we are the am hanivchar - the chosen people.”

“Okay,” said Basya. “But what does this have to do with our Tu B’shvat project? I still appreciate the fact that Morah Esty chose me. I’m allowed to back out if I want.”

### **Being Chosen Isn’t Just a Title**

“Because, as Rav Avigdor Miller says, being chosen isn’t just a title that you don’t do anything with. It means we have to take advantage of the fact that we’re chosen and utilize it. It means spending our time doing mitzvos and chessed. It means always looking to see how we can do more ratzon Hashem and demonstrate that we are worthy of being chosen.”

Basya smiled. “I get it. Morah Esty chose us because she thinks we’re special enough to do this project. She chose us for a reason. And if we don’t put effort into doing the best we can, then we were chosen for nothing.

## **Takeaway:**

We are the Chosen People, let’s act Chosen! We need to show Hashem that we appreciate being Chosen, by acting the part.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’iera 5784 email of Toras Avigdor Junior that is adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.*