

# SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS CHUKAS 5784

Volume 15, Issue 46 7 Tammuz 5784/July 13, 2024

Printed L'illuy nishmas Nechama bas R' Noach, a"h

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## The Survivor



Steve Rosenthal was one of the 37 survivors after the collapse of the Champlain Towers where he lived for twenty years. He describes how most of his neighbors were tragically killed, but he was saved from being crushed by a mere ten feet.

After this traumatic event, Steve moved to a nearby hotel. Out of the blue he gets a call from the police. "We found something of yours in the rubble," they said. Confused, Steve asked what it was. "Your *tefillin*," the police answered, and they promptly sent him a picture of his *tefillin* bag with his name on it.

From that moment forward, Steve Rosenthal knew that it was Hashem who had saved him that day. Every day he started coming to shul and wearing *tefillin* and

keeping Shabbat. So too, Bnei Yisroel clearly saw Hashem after Korach and his followers were destroyed. Let us not wait until Hashem shows us He is in control.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Korach 5784 email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

# Huge Reward

**By Aharon Spetner**

“Kinderlach,” said Rebbe Cohen, as a well-dressed man entered the classroom. “Anshel Holtzbacher stopped by our cheider and he graciously agreed to come and talk about some of the amazing work he is doing for Mosdos Horki.”

“Thank you, Rabbi Cohen,” Mr. Holtzbacher said, as he began to describe the many fascinating experiences he had working with the Horki Rebbe, how he had prevented the Governor from making matzah illegal, rescued a Yid from cannibals in the Amazon jungle, and more.

“Do any of you have any questions you’d like to ask me?” asked Mr. Holtzbacher after he had finished speaking.

Chezky raised his hand. “How did you become so rich?” he asked.

“Chezky!” admonished Rebbe Cohen. “That’s not a polite question!”

“It’s okay,” smiled Mr. Holtzbacher. “It’s a great story that I would love to share.

## **The Rebbe Told Me to Go to a Camera Store for a Sales Job**

“Many years ago, I had very little money. I went to the Horki Rebbe for a brocha and he told me about a camera store that was hiring. So, I went into the store and asked for a job. They hired me as a salesman and had me sit with the sales staff, answering phone calls from people looking to buy cameras.

“I didn’t know much about cameras at first, and I had a difficult time making enough money to feed my family. But slowly I learned and started to make a few sales. However, I never managed to make as much money as the other salespeople... Young Anshel Holtzbacher got off the phone and recorded his sale. It wasn’t a lot, but he managed to make another few dollars.

“Holtzbacher,” said Josh, one of the other salesmen. “Let me teach you a trick. The next time someone calls to buy a camera, tell him that you also have one of the rare ‘deluxe versions’ of that camera. Say that it is double the price, but you are

willing to sell it to him for only 20% more than the camera he wanted if he also buys all of the accessories.”

“Deluxe version? What’s that?” asked Anshel.

“It doesn’t exist,” laughed Josh. “But we put a little gold ‘deluxe’ sticker on it.”

“So, you lie?”

“It’s not lying,” said Josh. “It’s sales. You get half of the extra 20% and a bonus commission on all of the accessories - you’ll make three times as much on every sale. And because we are the only store that sells the ‘deluxe edition’ cameras, the customer will come back over and over again.”

“It sounds like lying to me,” Anshel said.



**Illustrated by Miri Weinreb**

“Holtzbacher, calm down,” said Dave, another salesman. “This is why you’re not making money like the rest of us. This is how business works.”

“I’m sorry,” said Anshel. “I won’t lie.”

As the other salesmen laughed at him, his phone rang.

“Hello?” he said.

Anshel listened in amazement as the caller said he needed 1,500 cameras for a special project.

“And I’ll need full accessories for all of these cameras,” he added.

### **Ringin' Up a \$500,000 Sale**

As Anshel started taking the order, the other salesmen one-by-one stopped what they were doing and watched in amazement and jealousy as Anshel rang up a \$500,000 sale.

“My commission on that sale was over \$200,000,” Mr. Holtzbacher said. “I made as much money that month as all of the other salesmen combined. I then used that money to start Holtzbacher Enterprises, where Hashem has continued to bless me ever since.”

“Wow...” said Chezky softly.

“I was so shocked at what happened, I rushed straight to the Horki Rebbe. And you know what the Rebbe said? He said that after the story of the Meraglim, Yehoshua and Kalev were rewarded by getting the chelek in Eretz Yisroel of all of the ten other spies who died.

### **Hashem Paid Them with an Extra Reward**

“Now why would that be? Why such a big reward? And the reason is because each and every one of the meraglim who wanted to say bad things about Eretz Yisroel made it harder for Yehoshua and Kalev to not go along. So, for every person whom they didn’t listen to, Hashem paid them with an extra reward.

“The Horki Rebbe explained that because I went against the shakranim in the camera store, Hashem rewarded me for each and every salesperson whom I didn’t listen to.

“Kinderlach, this is a very important lesson! When you see other people - possibly your own friends - doing something wrong, you might be tempted to join them. But remember, if you stand strong and do what Hashem wants, he will repay you over and over again for every single person that you didn’t listen to. It might not be with cash, but you can be sure that Hashem’s reward will be way better than whatever it is those people want you to do.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shelach 5784 email of Toras Avigdor Junior, adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.*

# The Tailor and the Jester

By Nissan Mindel

When the tailor died at a ripe old age, his passing didn't attract any special attention. Yet his funeral was most unusual for an ordinary tailor, for the Chief Rabbi of Lemberg himself led the funeral procession all the way to the cemetery. And of course, as the Chief Rabbi led the procession all the Jews of the town joined in giving the final honors to the deceased. The result was a funeral the likes of which is normally reserved for great rabbis or tzadikim.

## The Rabbi's Fascinating Story

The Jews of Lemberg had no doubt that the tailor had been a person of extraordinary merit, and they waited anxiously to hear what a wonderful eulogy the Chief Rabbi would give at the funeral. They were not disappointed when the rabbi told them the following tale:

Many years before, the rabbi had spent Shabbat at a village inn. The innkeeper related a story about a Jewish jester who lived in the mansion of the local poretz, the landowner of all the surrounding area. This jester had once been a simple, but G-d-fearing Jew, who by profession was a tailor. On a number of occasions, he had done work for the poretz, and as he was an entertaining man with a beautiful singing voice, and very funny, the poretz and his family became very fond of his company.

## Began to Neglect His Jewish Observance

They finally asked him to join their household in the capacity of a jester, which was common in those days. He accepted, and slowly began to neglect his Jewish observance, until he no longer conducted himself as a Jew at all. The innkeeper felt very sorry for this Jew, and both he and the rabbi expressed their deep wishes for his return to the fold.

That Friday afternoon, just before Shabbat a man came galloping up to the inn and requested to spend the Shabbat there. To their surprise the horseman was none other than the Jewish jester, who explained that he had come in order to gather material for his jokes and spoofs.

The innkeeper was afraid to refuse, and so agreed to have the jester as a guest. At the Shabbat table the rabbi spoke about the Torah portion and described how both Terach, Abraham's idol-worshipping father, and Ishmael, Abraham's unruly son, repented and were forgiven by G-d.

"Words that come from the heart penetrate the heart," is the saying, and the words of the rabbi affected the Jewish jester, who became more and more thoughtful

as Shabbat progressed. By Saturday night the jester so deeply regretted his life, that he approached the rabbi, and asked how he could do penance. The rabbi told him to leave his position with the poretz and withdraw for a time into a life of prayer, meditation and fasting. He should maintain this regime until such time when he would receive a sign from heaven that his repentance was accepted.

### **Locked Up in a Small Room to Spend the Entire Day in Prayer**

The jester accepted this advice wholeheartedly. He went to Lemberg where he entered a large synagogue and made an arrangement with the caretaker. According to their deal he would be locked in a small room where he would spend the entire day in prayer. At night before locking up, the caretaker would release him so that he might eat a little and stretch out for the night on a bench. Only on Friday night in honor of the Shabbat would he leave the synagogue to spend the day more comfortably.

This routine continued for many weeks until one Friday night the caretaker forgot to release him. The heartbroken tailor was now sure that G-d had forsaken him, and he wept bitterly. Hungry and tired, he fell into a deep sleep and dreamt. In the dream an old man appeared to him, and told him, "I am Elijah the Prophet, and I came to tell you that your teshuva has been accepted. Fast no longer. Every night I will come and teach you Torah, Torah such as only the righteous merit to learn."

### **A Bright Light Shining from the Tailor's Window**

The tailor opened a small shop and made a modest living. Late one night the Chief Rabbi passed his home and saw a bright light coming from the window. But when he entered, he saw only the tailor working by the light of a small candle. This happened two more times, and each time the rabbi found only a small candle illuminating the tailor's room.

The third time the rabbi pressed the tailor for an explanation, and was told all that had transpired since they had met at the village inn. The tailor also related that the prophet had told him that no inhabitant of the village would die as long as he lived.

The following day the rabbi instructed the local burial society to inform him every time there was a death in the city. True to the prophesy, each time there was a death, the deceased was not a resident, but someone who happened to be passing through. The rabbi concluded his strange tale, admonishing the townspeople that the power of teshuva is unlimited, and no matter what, G-d is always waiting for His children to return. (Adapted from the Storyteller.)

*Reprinted from the Parashat Shelach 5784 edition of L'Chaim, a publication of the Lubavitcher Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.*

# The Ten Groschen Deal

By Yehuda Z. Klitnick



Reb Mendel Saltz was well off financially in Poland where he resided. The majority of his business dealings with the numerous local poritz-noblemen revolved around managing fields and lumber forests and wholesale trading in agricultural products. He gave tzedaka generously to every needy guest.

A business deal that had the potential to be extremely profitable came up one day. Mendel was well-informed about a poritz who was offering for sale a forest that produced premium lumber. Mendel could have made a lot of money by owning the forest, but it had to be all cash.

He took out a loan to get the cash he needed to meet with the seller in person to close the deal. When he got to the poritz's house, he discovered that he was bedridden, and unable to conduct any business. The man whispered, "Come back in two days." Don't be concerned about our deal; Nobody else can take it away from you. Mendel was willing to wait because he knew the poritz to be a man of his word.

Despite this, he was reluctant to return home at night with a large sum of cash because it was common for travelers to be robbed. What can I do? He asked the man to keep the money safe until the sale could be completed because he trusted the

poritz. Mendel left without requesting a receipt for the money, a decision he would soon regret. Both parties were in agreement.

He heard that the poritz had passed away when he returned in two days, and the family was in complete disarray. Two stressful days passed with Mendel, trusting that the poritz's agreement will straighten out. His worst fears were soon realized. The estate had been taken care of by the poritz's son, who was completely unlike his father. He gambled a lot, and hated Jews fervently.

### **Asking the Son for His Money Back**

Mendel approached the son and said "Sir, not long before his demise, I left a huge amount of money here with your father for a timberland. If you would be so kind, I would like to get my money back.

The son scowled, "Show me a receipt with my father's signature on it." I didn't think I really wanted one, since I had confided in your dad in business over numerous years, and his statement was comparable to gold," said Mendel.

However, it fell on deaf ears, and the son ordered Mendel to leave! Mendel's fortunes began to decline after this unfortunate incident, and watched one of his endeavors after another flop completely.

Meanwhile, he acknowledged his destiny as Hashem's will. Mendel had a daughter who was old enough to be married. He was hoping to find a fine bochur who would be worthy of her. Presently, he was poor person, and no one came calling, since there was no endowment for the young girl.

### **Going to Ask Help from His Rebbe – Rav Tzvi of Neushtadt**

His wife begged him to see their Rebbe, Rav Dovid Tzvi of Neushtadt (author of Sefer Chemdas Dovid), the son Rav Yechezkel of Kuzmir z"l, (5532-5616) - a talmid of the Chozeh of Lublin- who was a close companion of the Chofetz Chaim. Mendel didn't even have enough money to pay for a wagon ride to Neushtadt, so he went there on foot, carrying only his tallis, tefillin, and some old bread.

After a tiresome trip, he stumbled into the Rebbe's room. "Holy Rebbe, I have never doubted Hashem's justice, because He does not punish without justification. However, my pious daughter is sin-free. She will make a magnificent spouse, however there are no shidduch possibilities for her. My heart is falling apart. Holy Rebbe, kindly assist."

The Rebbe was anguished by Mendel's situation, and his face, ordinarily brilliant and sparkling, became dull, turned with agony and pity. The Rebbe's face lit up with a smile after he had deeply immersed in Mendel's situation. The Rebbe took out One zloty, or one hundred groschen, from his pocket and said, "take this zloty and go on your way, and you'll be successful in all that you do."

Mendel turned to go, but the Rebbe called him back when he got to the door. I want the entire zloty back. Truly, 40 groschen should be enough."

Confused, Mendel did as the Rebbe said, and made it into the yard, when the shamash let him know the Rebbe was calling him back again.

The Rebbe said, "Give me back the 40 groschen and take this 10 groschen coin instead." Mendel didn't understand what had quite recently happened in the Rebbe's room! He was walking on the road for a few days when he heard a Polish voice shout, "Hey Jew, come over here."

### **A Group of Illiterate Peasants Called to Him with a Deal**

Around a fire, a group of illiterate peasant shepherds sat. Listen: A man was riding by some time prior and this book dropped out of his saddlebags. Need to get it?"

They showed an extravagant beautiful collection bound in gold end-boards - with banknotes between the pages.

"Give us a zloty and it's yours."

"I'm willing to give you 10 groschen in exchange. It's worth at least forty zloties with these gold-colored end plates!" Look, these bindings are the best part; you keep them. Allow me just to have the papers and take 10 groschen for your difficulty.

### **Separated the Paper Money from the Gold-Colored End Plates**

"Ok," said the peasant. Mendel separated the paper money and went on his journey with the banknotes secure in his backpack. A man on horseback rode by shortly after, still in Mendel's full view but now hidden behind a tree, circling back to retrieve the book he had lost. The shepherds threw the fancy book into the fire out of fear of being discovered and of being accused of theft.

Mendel perceived the rider. It was the young poritz who had conned him of his cash years ago. The shepherds dispersed, and the man fished his book out of the fire. He saw that the cash it contained was gone. "Those peasants consumed my cash. He headed out hopelessly!

At home, Mendel counted the cash. It came to exactly what he had lost at the poritz's house. He clearly saw the Rebbe's Ruach Kodesh. Assuming he would have had a full zloty, and purchased the entire book, the shepherds would have fingered him to the young poritz. The wavered talk among 40 and the 10 groschen clarified sense to him. These shepherds had agreed to a deal that gave Mendel enough money to get back to himself and marry his deserving daughter to a fine boy.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shelach 5784 email of Pardes Yehuda.*

# The Rebbe's Request to the Young Man Who Wanted to Marry a Non-Jewish Woman



**Rabbi Yissacher Dov Rokeach of Belz**

Rav Meilich Biderman once said that a Chasid of Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz, zt"l, had an only child, who was loved dearly. However, this son didn't grow up with Yiras Shamayim, and he became engaged to a gentile woman.

When the parents told Rebbe Yissacher Dov about this, the Rebbe requested that they bring their son to see him. Since he was brought up in a Chasidish home, the son had respect for Chasidish Rebbes, so he agreed to go. But he made it clear to his parents, and again later when he spoke with the Rebbe, that he would not drop his plans to marry this girl.

The Rebbe spoke with the young man for a while, and then Rebbe Yissacher Dov said, "All I ask is that when you get dressed for the wedding, please wear Tzitzis under your clothing." Then he turned to the father and said, "And all I want from you, is for you to go to the wedding."

The young man agreed to the condition. It was a tiny sacrifice, and as a bonus, his father would be at his wedding. The father didn't want to go to this wedding. However, the Rebbe requested, as strange as this request sounded, and it was now a sacred obligation, and he agreed to attend the wedding.

At the wedding, the guests had too much to drink, and they encouraged this young man to drink too. He didn't want to drink because he remembered from when he was being brought up in a Jewish home that this was looked down upon, and therefore, he knew better, but he couldn't stand up to the pressure they were putting on him to keep saying 'no' to their constant requests and urges.

After starting to drink, he began to feel hot, so he took off his jacket and unbuttoned his shirt. As he did this, everyone saw that he was wearing Tzitzis. The drunken crowd pointed to his Tzitzis and started yelling out, "He fooled us! He's still a Jew!" and they began to attack him.

His father managed to pull him away from the mob and bring him out of the hall. He now understood why the Rebbe had asked him to be at the wedding, as it was likely so he could save his son's life.

His son realized what a mistake he was making, and returned home with his father, determined to restart his life on a better path, realizing that the Mitzvah of Tzitzis has saved him from a disaster!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Korach 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

# Like Mother, Like Daughter

By Rabbi Benzion Klatzko

More than twenty years ago, I had a student who we sent to Israel. Her father was a Reform rabbi and her prospects for spending time in Israel in a religious environment were not too great. Until my family and I got to know her more and more and we eventually encouraged and supported her trip and stay in Israel.

She was incredibly moved by the experience and wound up staying in Israel for a longer time, eventually marrying a respected ben Torah who was learning in yeshiva. Decades later, she called me and filled me in on the details of the past years.

Her husband was still learning in Kollel, she had a family and she asked if she could introduce me to them. I was thrilled to comply.

She had ten children, eight of them girls. Greeting them all at the Kosel, I felt a swell of pleasure and privilege to meet them. In a way, they felt like grandchildren,

and I'd known that my own family had molded and shaped their mother and contributed in some way to the life and family she now had.



**Rabbi Benzion Klatzko**

But then it occurred to me. There were all but eight kids. Two were missing. “Where are your other two children?” I asked. “I only see eight.” She looked at me and smiled. “I have a boy who’s sixteen years old am in yeshiva. I know you’d like to have seen him, but I didn’t want to disturb his learning, so he stayed back for today.” I returned her a smile of my own. “You made the right choice. Torah is the important thing! And what about the other one?”

“The other is my daughter, Adina. She actually is a counselor in New York.” This caught my attention. “That’s wonderful. I’m going back to New York next week after my trip is over. I’d like to her.”

### **Invited Adina to Come to His Home for a Shabbos**

Sure enough, when I returned, I called her up. “Adina, I’d love to invite you to my home for a Shabbos. Come and see what your mother experienced many years ago.” She took up the offer, and was blown away and what her mother experienced and what she was now experiencing herself.

Adina grew close to my family. She was a beautiful light in the lives of others. And when she got married a few months later, my entire family flew in for the wedding.

She married my son.

I was mekarev her mother, and the daughter married my son. And today they live in Ramat Shlomo.

When we reach out, Hashem does amazing wonders.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Shelach 5784 edition of the Torahanytime.com Newsletter as edited and compiled by Elan Perchik.*

# Washing and Wishing

By Rabbi Yechiel Spero

Rav Yisrael Aryeh Margolis, later known as the Premishlaner Rebbe of London, the patriarch of the prestigious Margolis family, lived in Galicia before World War II. There he enjoyed a close relationship with Rav Aharon of Belz. While he was blessed with a magnificent family, eleven children in all, he didn't have the means to support them. Rav Yisrael Aryeh hoped to find a job locally, but there were almost no opportunities, so he realized he would have to seek parnassah elsewhere.

The Belzer Rebbe, who was intimately aware of Rav Yisrael Aryeh's greatness in Torah and his exceptional care and love for all Yidden, recommended him for the position of rav in a city in Hungary. He praised Rav Yisrael Aryeh as a true gadol, one with the appropriate talents and capabilities to motivate and inspire the kehillah. Eager to hire such an individual, the shul committee sent a ksav rabbanus and invited Rav Yisrael Aryeh to come and spend some time with the kehillah. He would speak publicly and meet the prominent members of the kehillah.

Upon receiving their invite, Rav Yisrael Aryeh accepted the offer to visit the town, so he could see firsthand if it would be workable for his family. Galicia and Hungary were two different worlds. In those days, there were only two trains a week from Galicia to Hungary. One of them departed on Wednesday and arrived on Sunday. The second one left immediately after Shabbos, arriving in the middle of the week. Wednesday was not an option, because it included travel on Shabbos, so Rav Yisrael Aryeh chose to travel on Motza'ei Shabbos, immediately after davening Maariv at the zman of Rabbeinu Tam.

His Chassidim organized a minyan for him right at the station. But there was still one issue. Where would he wash for Melaveh Malkah? To Rav Yisrael Aryeh, washing for Melaveh Malkah was non-negotiable. However, in those days, there was no way to access water on trains. Even at the train stops, there was no guarantee that there would be water available. So where would he wash?

After conducting some research, Rav Yisrael Aryeh discovered that the train was going to make one stop between Galicia and Hungary. Over there, he would be able to find water. Even better, the train was scheduled to arrive at the stop before midnight, which would allow him to wash before chatzos, the preferable time to eat Melaveh Malkah. With all the preparations out of the way and all the details ironed out, Rav Yisrael Aryeh boarded the train and headed toward Hungary.

But on the way, he ran into some unexpected difficulty. Indeed, there was one stop along the way, right on schedule. And, as planned, he hurriedly disembarked from the train and ran to retrieve some water so he could wash his hands for Melaveh Malkah. But when he returned to the train, he encountered resistance. The Hungarian conductor,

a virulent anti-Semite, refused to allow him to board the train again. Rav Yisrael Aryeh begged him to open the doors, but the conductor would not give in. Rav Yisrael Aryeh banged on the doors, pleading, but all he received was an antagonistic smirk in return. The whistle blew. The train was departing the station. He tried running after the train, but he quickly recognized there was nothing more to do.

Holding only a piece of bread in his hand, Rav Yisrael Aryeh watched as the train left the station. With his suitcases and all his personal items still on the train, Rav Yisrael Aryeh stood hapless and helpless at the station in the middle of nowhere. Deeply disheartened, it was time to decide where he wanted to go and how he would get there. He realized it would be best if he headed home by foot, a journey of three days. After all his plans, and all the hope and dreams, he had never made it to his destination. He kept walking, enduring the bitter cold and brutal conditions, until he finally reached his town.

Exhausted, he made up his mind that he would put on the best face possible. He would explain how it was all from Hashem, and this was all for the best. But when he walked up to his house, he noticed through the window that the mirrors were covered, as if the people living there were in mourning. Confused, he knocked on the door and let himself in. As soon as he entered, his family froze. And then they ran over to him, crying as if they had seen a ghost.

What they were looking at defied logic. After hearing bits and pieces, Rav Yisrael Aryeh began to make sense of all he was hearing. The nine people with whom he had davened Maariv had witnessed him boarding the train. They had no doubt whatsoever that he was on board. Even his luggage was on the train. But there had been a deadly train crash, with no survivors. And since Rav Yisrael Aryeh's body had not been found, it was assumed that he had been buried underneath the deep snow.

Shuddering from the implications of what had just transpired, he realized that unquestionably, the zechus of Melaveh Malkah had saved his life. Rav Yisrael Aryeh never did travel back to Hungary. Instead, he took a position in London, and that is where he created his legacy. His children would go on to become rabbanim, Admorim, and community leaders, who warmed and inspired the heart of English Jewry.

Furthermore, residing in England, he and his entire family were saved from the horrors of the Holocaust, having left Galicia before the clouds of darkness descended upon European Jewry. One nasty Hungarian anti-Semite had sealed off the doors, thereby opening the archway for generations of the Margolis family. What an important lesson to remember. Sometimes, it appears as if the doors of life are closing. But in reality, a whole new world of opportunity may just be opening

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shelach 5784 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table.*