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The Bach, the Innkeeper and the Wealthy Man

Rav Yoel Sirkes, zt"l, the Rav of Krakow, was known as the Bach. He had a wealthy Talmid, and he would teach him to be generous with the gifts Hashem had given him. One day, an innkeeper complained to the Bach that someone was trying to take over the lease of his inn for himself, and he offered the landlord a larger sum of money than he could afford.



Tombstone of the Bach

The innkeeper told the Bach that if this man succeeded, he would lose his entire Parnasah. The Bach summoned his wealthy student and told him about the

innkeeper's struggle. The Talmid knew the landlord, and he agreed to intercede to try and make sure that he would not lease the inn to anyone else.

However, he said that he first had to travel on a business trip to Leipzig. Afterwards, when he returned, he said he would be happy to attend to the matter and speak with the landlord. The innkeeper was desperate, and he begged him to take care of this first and then go on the trip. He worried that by the time the student returned, he would have already lost his home and his source of income.

Rebuked the Innkeeper for Not Having Enough Emunah

The wealthy man asked the distraught innkeeper to sit down, and he told him that he had to strengthen his Emunah. He said, "You don't need to help Hashem with your calculations. Hashem will take care of you. Do not be afraid!"

When the innkeeper came home and told his wife what had happened, she was completely distressed, and she rebuked her husband for letting the wealthy man delay his meeting. In the end, it all turned out fine.

When the wealthy man returned from his trip, he went to speak to the landlord, and he was able to arrange for the innkeeper to keep his lease. He was also able to get a guarantee that the landlord would not lease the inn to anyone else for the next ten years. The innkeeper and his wife were very relieved and happy, and they were extremely grateful.

The Wealthy Man's Case in the Heavenly Court

Many years later, the wealthy man passed away while the Bach was still living, and he appeared to the Bach in a dream. He wanted to tell his Rebbe what had happened to him when he arrived in Shamayim. He said, "After my case was heard by the Heavenly Court, Baruch Hashem I was judged favorably, and I was brought into Gan Eden.

"The aroma of Gan Eden is like nothing I had ever smelled, and all I felt was goodness. Suddenly, I saw a Malach (angel) walking toward me, and he blocked my way from going forward. He then began to drag me out of Gan Eden! I asked him, 'Who are you? And why are you taking me out of this wonderful place?'

He said, 'I am the Malach that was created from your Mitzvah of saving the innkeeper and his family from losing their Parnasah. But you have no idea how many tears, how much worry, and the amount of Shalom Bayis problems you caused by delaying your help until you got back from that trip.'

"The Malach brought me back to the Bais Din Shel Ma'alah, and they ruled that I would need to wait at the gates of Gan Eden for the same amount of time that I had made the innkeeper wait until I helped him. I came to tell you this story so that you can teach others about how important it is to not delay giving assistance to those in need!"

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

The Baal Shem Tov's Miraculous Visit to Berlin

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

The innkeeper could not believe his ears. The stranger who had stopped by his inn last night with his followers insisted that he intended to spend the coming Shabbos in Berlin.

“But that city is hundreds of miles away! How can you possibly make it?”

The Baal Shem Tov had not revealed his identity, all he had said was that as a traveling darshan (preacher - guest speaker in synagogues), he wished to be present at the wedding of a certain wealthy person which was to take place that Friday in Berlin.

No Doubts of Reaching Berlin in Time for Shabbos

“I have excellent horses,” the BeShT insisted. “I have no doubts of reaching there by Shabbos.”

“Very well, then, can I come along with you? I have to be in Berlin too.”

The innkeeper actually had to be in a city some twenty miles from Berlin but thought this an excellent opportunity to get a ride. Besides, he was quite curious to see how close his guest would actually get to the German city.

When the following day dawned, the innkeeper was up and about, making bustling preparations for his voyage. The Baal Shem Tov, however took his time. He prayed leisurely and then was served a nice breakfast.

“Why are you not hurrying?” the innkeeper asked in concern. “You will never reach your destination in time for Shabbos.”

“Never fear,” his guest calmly assured the man. “We will reach Berlin by tomorrow, please G-d.”

Amazed by His Guest's Confidence

The innkeeper looked at his guest in amazement and thought, “He seems so sure of himself. I must go along and see what happens.”

As it happened, the Besht did not leave until that evening when he finally called together the chasdim accompanying him and the innkeeper. They set forth, traveling all that night; the passengers all fell asleep, of course.

When the morning sun shone upon the world, the innkeeper could see that they had arrived at their destination. His surprise was beyond description. [1]

The Baal Shem Tov made his quarters some distance from the rich man's home. At twelve o'clock that day the city was in an uproar. The kallah (bride) had suddenly fainted and lay unconscious. Nothing could revive her. All the noted doctors of the city had tried their best, in vain. A crowd of curious spectators surrounded the house, attracting the visiting innkeeper as well.

The Innkeeper Offers a Suggestion

When he learned the cause of all the commotion the innkeeper spoke up, "I think I know someone who might be able to help the girl."

He began to tell of the miraculous journey in which he had participated. "This darshan," he continued, claims that he can perform medical wonders as well. I would suggest asking him to come here."

The rich man himself went to the hotel where the Baal Shem Tov was staying. He pleaded for him to come and see what could be done for his bride. To his dismay, the Besht commanded the household staff, "Prepare the shrouds according to your custom." He turned to the distraught man with further instructions, "Go and order a grave dug. Take along separately the wedding garments which the kallah was to have worn."

Soon the funeral procession was making its way to the cemetery. "Place the coffin with the bride into the grave," the rebbe instructed.

Called for Two Strong Men

Then he called two strong men from among the spectators. "Come and stand by the grave," he said. "When you see any change in the girl's face, you are to remove her at once from the grave." He leaned over the body and stood thus bent over, for a quarter of an hour.

Suddenly her face assumed a rosy hue. In an instant the two men lifted her out of the grave. "Lead her immediately to the chupah (wedding canopy)!" the Besht further instructed.

The bride was dressed up in the clothes that had been provided and taken directly to her house where the wedding ceremony was held without delay. At the request of the chatan (bridegroom), the Baal Shem Tov agreed to officiate at the ceremony. At the end, as the young bride lifted her veil to drink the wine, she suddenly took a closer unobstructed look at the rabbi in front of her.

"This is the man who saved me from death!" she exclaimed in surprise.

After the chupah, the bride told the entire story. The rich man, a widower, had taken his niece into his home when she had become orphaned. In the course of time his wife had sickened. As she lay on her deathbed, she had one final request: that her husband refrain from marrying the niece, for she was jealous. She made both her husband and his niece give their word and hand not to marry after her death.

Despite their promise, the two eventually decided to get married. On her wedding day, the kallah was visited by the deceased woman who intended to murder her.

Rebuked the Spirit of the Kallah's Jealous Aunt

“I had to hold a din Torah (a Rabbinical Court case),” the Besht explained, “between those two litigants. I found the chatan and kallah to be innocent for they only gave their promises to ease the first wife’s departure from this world. So, when I was standing in concentration over the young girl’s grave, I rebuked the spirit of her aunt, telling her that the bride must not be prevented from going to the chupah.”

“That was the voice I heard while I lay in the grave,” the kallah spoke now, “and this was the first face I saw when I removed my veil.”

The Baal Shem Tov remained there for that Shabbos. When he left Berlin on Sunday, he was accompanied by a huge crowd of admirers who wished to escort him on his way.

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Source: Excerpted and modified by R. Yerachmiel Tilles from “Tales of the Baal Shem Tov” (vol. 5, first story) by Yisroel-Yaakov Klapholz, as translated by Sheindel Weinbach. Based on the Hebrew book, Hachezyonos.

Why this week? The Baal Shem Tov’s *yahrzeit* is on the first day of Shavuot, which is on Tuesday night-Wednesday, June 11-12.

Biographical note: Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer [of blessed memory: 18 Elul 5458- 6 Sivan 5520 (Aug. 1698 - May 1760)], the Baal Shem Tov [“Master of the Good Name” often referred to as the Besht for short], a unique and seminal figure in Jewish history, revealed his identity as an exceptionally holy person, on his 36th birthday, 18 Elul 5494 (1734), and made the until-then underground Chasidic movement public. He wrote no books, although many works claim to contain his teachings. One available in English is the excellent annotated translation of *Tzava'at Harivash*, published by Kehos.

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*[1] Even in today’s automobiles, the trip from western Ukraine (Kiev) to Berlin is a drive of more than 12 hours.*

*Reprinted from the Parshat Bamidbar 5784 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed in Israel.*

# A New Marriage

By Rabbi Yechiel Spero



**Rabbi Hillel Paley**

Rabbi Hillel Paley has shared with the world his beautiful music. His famous songs are household names, often sung at kumzitzes, not only in Eretz Yisrael but around the world. Reb Hillel has a distinctive look. With his hat, jacket, and tie, he looks more like a rebbi or mashgiach than a singer. And that's with good reason. His kumzitzes are not just a collection of songs sung to the accompaniment of a guitar, but inspiring, uplifting events, filled with chizuk and melodies that reach deep down into each and every neshamah present.

## **A Tragic Egged Bus Accident**

In the summer of 2023, he told a personal story, one dear to his heart, making the kumzitz at which he shared it one of his most stirring events yet. It looked like a terror attack, only it wasn't. On August 11, 2022, a driver of an Egged bus pulled over to the side of the road and put his bus in park. He wanted to check out something in his bus. However, for some reason, the brake didn't hold.

Tragedy ensued, as the bus rolled off on its own, swerving into a storefront. Mrs. Shoshana Glustein and two of her daughters were killed in the crash, and others were injured. One young woman, twenty-one years old and married just six months, was crushed under the weight of the bus. For weeks, the newlywed girl, Batsheva, fought for her life, slipping in and out of consciousness.

During the entire time, her husband, Chaim, sat by her bedside. Until one day, she opened her eyes. It had been such a long journey, but now she was alive — and she was going to live. Soon after she woke up, Batsheva looked down at her legs and realized what had happened. In an effort to save her life, the doctors were forced to amputate her feet. Batsheva, who had her entire life ahead of her, now had to face the reality that she would never walk on her own two feet again.

### **The Young Woman was Reb Hillel's Daughter-in-Law**

This young woman, Reb Hillel shared at the kumzitz, is his daughter-in-law. And she and Chaim, his son, worked their hardest to embrace the challenge and to grow from it. One conversation, which took place shortly after Batsheva emerged from the coma, captures the essence of who they are. And who we are, as well.

Batsheva asked her husband a question. “Tell me the truth. If you would have known beforehand that this was going to happen to me, would you have married me anyway?” Chaim, a young avreich, didn't want to pay mere lip service. His wife had a real question, and he wanted to give her a real answer. This is not a question for which he had been prepped in school, not a question whose answer can be looked up in a sefer.

### **A Most Unusual Response from His Heart**

The response had to come from deep inside his heart, and it did. This is what he said. “If someone would have asked me when I was single, ‘Would you be willing to meet a girl with no feet?’ then, in all honesty, I would have said no. There's no reason in the world that I would have chosen a wife who cannot walk on her own two feet.

“But there's a big difference here. Had this happened before our chasunah, then it would have happened to you. However, after the wedding, it happened to us,” Chaim continued, “and it happened to me.

“Beforehand, our marriage was an ordinary marriage. It was no different from anyone else's. But now that this happened to us, ani koreit itach brit chadashah, I am sealing a new bond with you, entering into a new marriage with you, one in which we will have a special and unique connection.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Kedoshim 5784 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “Now That's a Story.”*

# A Soul for a Soul

By Rabbi Joey Haber



**Rabbi Joey Haber**

A relative of mine, who studies in a Kollel in Lakewood, personally told me the following.

Like many of his friends, he is married with a family, as is the case for those learning in Kollel. However, one of the other Kollel members had been married for five years and hadn't been blessed with children. With the many other young men and women taking note of this, endeavoring in every which way to be supportive, encouraging and helpful to this young couple became a collective undertaking.

Special efforts in davening and other forms of emotional support were extended in the hopes of easing the couple through their moments of challenge and eliciting Hashem's blessing. Significant resources were similarly poured into being there for them, and this couple didn't take it for granted by any measure. They knew how much everyone else around them was at their side and behind them.

In fact, the husband was so appreciative and good natured that after a member of the Kollel had their fourth child, he opened his home to the Kollel member's family and hosted the Shalom Zachor on the Friday night before the bris.

The members of the Kollel absolutely loved this man, so much so that they decided to arrange for someone to make a visit to Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l and ask for a beracha. Entering Rav Chaim's personal study, the circumstances were explained. Rav Chaim advised as such:

“Let all the friends gather for the purpose of helping one irreligious Jewish child obtain a Torah education. Since you are aiming to help this man and his wife bring a neshama into this world, do something middah k'negged middah, measure



for measure. Help a child who is not religious receive a Jewish education, through which he will become religious. By doing so, you are enabling a neshama to return to Hashem, and through that, may Hashem grant this man and his wife the beracha of meriting to bring a neshama down to this earth. Do this, and watch what Hashem does.”

On January 7, 2020, the boy who was chosen to enter a Jewish school to receive a Torah education began his studies at a yeshiva. And just under a year later—on January 6, 2021—this man and his wife had a baby boy.

My relative, at the time he related this story to me, said, “I’m now on my way to the bris, and Joey, I just needed to tell you this story.”

Hashem runs the world. That’s all there is to say. Every aspect and facet of it, calculated down to the smallest minutiae and precise detail.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Bechutai 5784 edition of the Torahanytime Newsletter edited and compiled by Elan Perchik.*

# No Limits

**By Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro**



**Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro**

A number of years ago, Beinish traveled to Los Angeles to receive a bone marrow transplant at the City of Hope hospital. He was told that he’d need to remain nearby the hospital for several months in case he needed to be called back for a check-up. In the meantime, two of his friends from back home in the East Coast flew out to visit and support him as he underwent a long period of recovery and recuperation.

While Beinish, along with his friends, spent some quality time together, they discovered that there was a Jew from Jerusalem who was also at the hospital and scheduled to have a bone marrow transplant. They decided that they'd visit him together.

But when they arrived, it was too late. "He had the transplant a half-hour ago," said the lead nurse. "At this time, he's not able to see any visitors." They had missed the window of catching him before he went in for the procedure.

### **The Nurse Asks for a Favor**

About to turn around and head the other way, the nurse called out. "Wait," he said, giving pause to the three men. "Can I ask for a favor?"

The three of them glanced at each other. What favor could they offer the nurse? But they'd listen.

"I always tell the patient before the transplant begins what to expect. For about forty-eight hours afterwards, they won't have much strength. They'll feel very weak and lack nearly all their energy. Mostly, they'll lie down without moving much. But I tell them not to worry, because this type of post-op recovery is normal.

"The thing is," went on the nurse, "I wasn't able to tell this to the man who came in today from Jerusalem, because he speaks Hebrew and I speak English. I didn't know how to communicate this to him, and there was no one around who could interpret for me. But you three speak Hebrew. His wife is over there, and it would be important for her to know this information, so both she and her husband can be prepared."

### **Observing a Most Unreal Scene**

As the nurse stood talking to the three of them, from behind a glass wall in the distance, the men began observing an unreal scene. It was the man from Jerusalem who had just had the transplant a half-hour ago. He wiggled his feet off the bed, albeit slowly, stood up and grabbed hold of the IV pole, made his way to where his clothing was and put on his black hat, walked to the sink and washed netillas yadayim, and then got back into bed. Stunned, the nurse began mouthing aloud, audibly, "It's not possible... It's not possible!"

One of the three men, witness to the incredulous scene, approached the nurse. "Excuse me, but I'd say there's one of two explanations. Either we just witnessed a one-in-a-million medical miracle, or, by your own admission and because of the language barrier, it was the first time you couldn't convey to the patient what they wouldn't be able to do. Maybe when you don't tell somebody what they can't do, they are able to do it."

The nurse took such words to heart, and from that point on, never again so forcefully told a patient what they can't do. There would be recommendations and precautions given, but nothing ever set in stone.

When you tell somebody their limitations and what they can't do, it often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. They become unable to do it. But if you don't tell someone what they can't do, they might surprise you and accomplish the unexpected and the extraordinary.

The man from Jerusalem wasn't told to expect staying bedridden for two days, and when he didn't know what he couldn't do, there were no limitations.

And he did the so-called impossible.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Bechutai 5784 edition of the Torahanytime Newsletter edited and compiled by Elan Perchik.*

## **D[Anger]**

**By Aharon Spetner**



*Illustrated by Miri Weinreb*

It was a bright sunny day in University City when Rabbi Greenblatt walked into the Post Office. He observed the long line of people waiting, and took a number, then sat down and opened his small Gemara while he waited for his turn.

“Hi Rabbi!”

Rabbi Greenblatt looked up.

“Good morning, Mr. Herschenstein,” Rabbi Greenblatt said. “How are you?”

“Oh, I’m doing just great,” answered Mr. Herschenstein. “You know, I’ve been pondering what you told me last week and I think I might be able to find some time to start coming to your morning Chumash shiur. It sounds really interesting.”

“That’s great!” Rabbi Greenblatt said. “I’ll be looking forward to seeing you there!”

“Three thousand, seven hundred forty-six!” called a voice from the front of the room.

### **The Rabbi Walks to the Counter**

Rabbi Greenblatt walked to the counter, noticing the name “Big Moose” on the postal worker’s name tag.

“Good morning, Mr. Moose,” Rabbi Greenblatt said with a smile, handing the man a slip of paper. “I received this in my mailbox this morning. Something about a package that I need to pick up?”

“Wait right here, sir,” Big Moose said, as he disappeared into the back, returning with his supervisor, who was carrying a box which appeared to have smoke coming out of it.

“Rabbi,” the supervisor said. “Your package has been flagged as suspicious. Do you know why it is smoking?”

“Oh, that’s not smoke - it’s vapor from the dry ice,” Rabbi Greenblatt answered.

“Dry ice?” Alarmed, the supervisor quickly picked up his radio. “We have a code three situation here,” he said.

### **Schmaltz Herring for Shabbos**

“Yes, my son-in-law in Lakewood sent me schmaltz herring for Shabbos. He packed it with dry ice so it would stay cold.”

“Schmaltz herring?” Big Moose said. “Where have I heard that word before? It sounds dangerous.”

The supervisor picked up his radio again. “Escalate that to a code seven!” he ordered. “We have an unknown volatile substance! Initiate containment procedures!”

“No, no,” Rabbi Greenblatt said, opening the package. “Here, let me show you.”

Nervously, Big Moose and the supervisor peered into the box to see many layers of plastic wrapping.

“Sir, why would you need so many layers of protection if we are not dealing with radioactive material? I need you to stand back for your own safety.”

Rabbi Greenblatt ignored the command and quickly unwrapped the container of herring.

“See?” he said. “It’s just fish. Now, if you don’t mind, I must be going.”

But before Rabbi Greenblatt could leave with his herring, Mr. Herschenstein angrily approached the counter.

“What is going on here?” he demanded, his face growing red. “Don’t you know who this is? This is Rabbi Greenblatt, the greatest rabbi in the entire state of Missouri! How dare you give him such a hard time over a package of fish?”

Mr. Herschenstein pounded his fist on the counter, frightening everyone waiting in the post office.

### **Found the Rabbi Waiting for Him**

A few minutes later, Mr. Herschenstein left the post office to see Rabbi Greenblatt standing outside waiting for him.

“Hi Rabbi, what are you still doing here?” he asked.

“My dear friend,” Rabbi Greenblatt said. “I must talk to you about your anger. You know, it is a terrible thing to get angry like that. It’s not good for your health or your soul.”

“I know, I know, my wife always tells me the same thing. But how do I destroy my anger?”

“Destroy it? You don’t want to destroy it,” Rabbi Greenblatt said. “You know, the holiest of all of the Tribes of Israel is Shevet Levi. Why is that? Well Levi got angry after a man named Shechem kidnapped his sister and, along with his brother Shimon, wiped out the entire city.

“Now, Yaakov Avinu didn’t approve of this. He strongly rebuked Shimon and Levi and even cursed their anger. But did Levi get rid of his anger? Oh no, he learned to use it. Years later, when the Jews created the golden calf, it was the Tribe of Levi who made a stand to defend Hashem’s honor.

“Only this time, they used their anger to take action in the way that Hashem approved.”

### **No Need to Entire Rid Oneself of Anger**

Mr. Herschenstein’s eyes widened. “So, you mean I don’t have to get rid of my anger, I only need to channel it correctly?”

“Exactly,” Rabbi Greenblatt answered. “Anger used in the wrong way is extremely dangerous. But like anything else, if done properly you can use it to serve Hashem and become great.”

“Would your Chumash shiur help me learn how to properly use my anger for good?”

“It would be a great start,” Rabbi Greenblatt said with a smile. “I’ll see you tomorrow morning bright and early!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

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