

# SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS KI SISA 5783

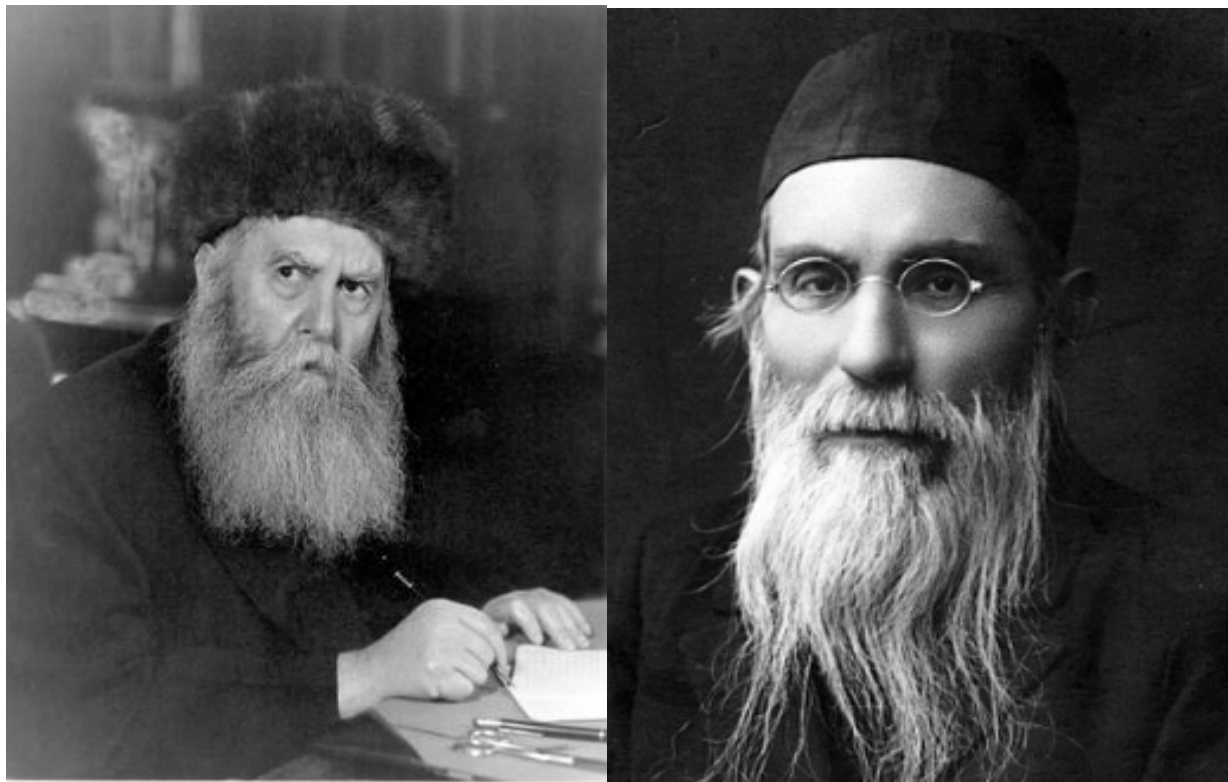
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## Deceptive Chassidim



**From left to right; Rav Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, zt"l and Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zt"l**

I want to begin by telling you a true story. Right now, it will be just a story but I hope that by the time we finish tonight you'll understand it very well. Somebody was once talking to the Lubavitcher Rebbe; I think it was the previous one, Rav Yosef Yitzchak, zichrono livrachah, 1880-1950. And he was complaining to the Rebbe.

“Your talmidim,” he said, “are deceiving everyone. They're putting up a front as if they are very frum Jews, the way they dress and act. But I don't think it's so true. I know some of them and I think it's a deception.”

### **The Punishment for Deceiving the Public for Charity**

So Rav Yosef Yitzchok told this man, “The Mishnah (Peah 8:9) says that if someone deceives the public in order to get charity – for example, he acts like he has a swollen belly, like he's suffering from starvation; or if he acts like his foot is chopped off, he bends his knee up to make it appear like he's one-legged - so the Sages tell us that someone who does that, he presents himself with an artificial behavior on the outside, so he's guaranteed that the end will be that's how it will turn out.

“One day he'll be in a smash up and he'll lose his leg. Or he'll be stranded somewhere with no food and he'll suffer from starvation. The way you behave on the outside to deceive people, that's how it's going to turn out in the end. “And so,” Rav Yosef Yitzchak said, “Let my students, my chassidim, keep faking their tzidkus, their piety. Let them act that way on the outside until it actually happens to them. The way they behave, that's how it'll turn out in the end...”

### **The Alter of Slabodka's Similar Reaction**

And so, we come back to the story that we began the lecture with, the story of Rav Yosef Yitzchok's chassidim. But I'll say a similar story with another tzaddik. In Slabodka someone asked the Alter zichrono livrachah (Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, 1849-1927). He said, “Do you know that your boys are deceiving you? Your boys act as if they were ba'alei mussar. They act like they are men with great ideals of ethical behavior and attitude. They act as if they have mussar but they're deceiving you.” So the Alter said, “They're trying to deceive me. They're busy deceiving me and deceiving me more until I deceive them. I deceive them because eventually they become the baalei mussar I want them to be.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Terumah 5783 email of Toras Avigdor, based on the world-famous Torah lectures of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt"l.*

# The Junk in the Neighbor's Backyard

The Gluck\* family lived for many years in a semi-attached house in Boro Park. Their immediate neighbor, with whom they shared a wall, was a Holocaust Survivor. When she passed away, her children sold the house to the Berger\* family.

The old woman had not made any home improvements for decades, so the Bergers hired a contractor to renovate the home before they moved in. Excitement ran high on moving day. The Bergers were so happy to move into their new home. Their neighbors, the Glucks, were most welcoming. They brought over dinner on the Berger's first night, and a warm relationship seemed to be developing. They were each respectful of the others' privacy.

## **The New Neighbor was Extremely Clean and Orderly**

And, the Glucks only had one car, so that left more room for the Bergers. A valuable commodity in Boro Park! Mrs. Berger was extremely clean and orderly by nature. Her home was spotless, even for unexpected visitors. Her front yard was flawlessly manicured, and her backyard was neat and welcoming.

One thing bothered Mrs. Berger to no end. The Glucks seemed to be neat people in every respect, however, their backyard resembled a junkyard. There were piles of garbage all over the place. This not only bothered Mrs. Berger, but also prevented her from hosting family and friends for a barbecue in her backyard. She would have been too embarrassed to host anyone with all that garbage in view.

Mrs. Berger asked her husband if they could put up a wall between their backyard and the Glucks. Her husband refused. It would be too offensive! She persisted, asking her husband to offer the Glucks to hire someone to haul away their garbage, and the Bergers would pay for it. Her husband again refused; it would offend their neighbors, and he was not willing to sour their relationship.

## **"It's Not the End of the World!"**

"Just learn to live with it," he told his wife. "It's not the end of the world."

Then came Yossie Berger's bar mitzvah. They planned to have the men enter from the front and the women from the back. That's when Mrs. Berger put her foot down. "Just ask Mr. Gluck if we can haul away the junk, at our expense," she said.

Mr. Berger hesitated, and finally made the call. After a few pleasantries, Mr. Berger got to the point. "So, we want the ladies to enter our house from the backyard, and we were wondering if we could hire someone to haul away the items in your

backyard, at our expense. There's really nothing wrong with it, just you know how ladies are about these things... It won't cost you a dime..."

Silence. Mr. Gluck did not respond. Mr. Berger thought to himself, "That's it. I just lost a good neighbor."

Finally, Mr. Gluck found his voice, "You can really do what you want with that stuff. You don't need my permission."

"What do you mean? It's your backyard!" Mr. Gluck explained, "It's not really my stuff. Do you remember that you hired a contractor before you moved in? Your contractor was under the gun to finish the job and did not have a dumpster. He took the liberty of putting all those things in our backyard. He never hauled it away. We didn't want to bother you, so we called the contractor, but he never took care of it. We assumed you knew about it, but thought maybe you didn't have enough money to pay for the removal, and we didn't have the money for it, so we just let it ride."

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tetzaveh 5783 email of The Weekly Vort. (Excerpted from Stories to Inspire)*

## **The Mitzvah for Repairing a Sefer Torah for Just \$500**

The following story was told in Torah Wellsprings. A community near Monsey was renovating their Bet Midrash. They decided, "If we're spending thousands of dollars to make our Bet Midrash more beautiful, we should also invest in checking and beautifying the Sefer Torah." A sofer reviewed the Sefer Torah and discovered that it was passul—invalid. He said it would cost five thousand dollars to fix it.

The Rosh Hakahal refused to give so much money. "I'll pay you five hundred dollars, but not a penny more." It didn't really make sense. He was paying tens of thousands of dollars to beautify the Bet Midrash, but for the most important part – the Sefer Torah – he wasn't ready to spend money. The sofer explained the immense work involved in fixing a Sefer Torah, to no avail. The Rosh Hakahal refused to pay more than five hundred dollars.

The sofer called up a colleague and requested help towards correcting the Sefer Torah. He said, "This community is using a passul Sefer Torah, and if we don't fix it, they will continue using it. Let's work together to make the Torah kosher. We will only be paid five hundred dollars — but we'll do it for a mitzvah." His friend agreed.

On the day they completed fixing the Sefer Torah, satisfied that they were able to do this mitzvah, they began their trek to Monsey. On the way there, they needed to make a stop to use the restroom. The only restroom in the area was in a Christian cemetery, so they went there.

The guard stationed at the entrance asked for their names, addresses, and telephone numbers. The men gave the information and went inside. A few weeks later, they received a phone call from a lawyer. At first, they were afraid that they were being accused of some crime, but the lawyer was telling them that they would each receive \$62,000.

### **The Funeral of a Wealthy Person**

The day they were in the cemetery, a funeral of a wealthy person was taking place. This wealthy man didn't have any children, so he stipulated in his will that his money should be distributed among those who attended his funeral. Being that they had registered with the guard at the entrance, they were endowed with this large sum of money.

These men made a sacrifice to help a congregation have a kosher Sefer Torah, and Hashem paid them for their dedication. The word נתן – give is a palindrome; it reads the same way forward and backwards, because when you give, it comes back to you.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Terumah 5783 email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

## **The Chessed Boomerang**

Shlomo Horwitz told an amazing story about a 17-year-old yeshivah student named Rafi who was eager and ready to do mitzvot and change the world. Rafi was on a bus in Jerusalem and having an existential moment, wondering what his purpose in life was. The radio was playing, and the talk-show host interrupted the music to answer an urgent call into the radio station.

A young boy called in crying and said, "I'm one of five children. My father died this year and my mother can't pay the electric bill. The electric company shut our power and we're freezing. We need 1,800 shekels to have it turned back on."

The radio host got back on and left the number of the station for any donations.

Rafi heard this and immediately decided this was his purpose. He had a mission! He ran off the bus at the next stop and grabbed a payphone and called the radio station. He said, "I heard the broadcast and I will raise the money. Tell the family now that everything is going to be okay!" He opened his wallet, and he started with the 300 shekel he had on him. He started going into store after store to raise the money. He started to tell the store owners, "There was something on the radio..."

### **He Quickly Got Donations**

And the owners said, "Yes! We heard it! Are you that guy that's going to be collecting?" Rafi said, "Yes, that's me," and he quickly got donations of 50 shekels, 100 shekels, 700 shekels, 20 shekels; everyone gave what they were able to. He raised the money and quickly got to the station to drop it off. The host looked at this young boy in awe and said, "Who are you!" Rafi only gave his first name and left.

10 years later, Rafi was married with two children, struggling financially as an aspiring rabbi. He was telling his friend that the electric company had shut off his power because he has an outstanding bill of 3,800 shekel. Another man overheard them chatting, and said, "Wait one second. What's the meter number on your bill?"

Rafi happened to have the bill on him and showed the man. The man pulled out his cell phone and walked out and came back in to tell Rafi it's all settled, and his power will be turned back on in a few hours. Rafi, shocked, asked, "Why would you do that? How?!"

The man said, "It's not me, it's my aunt Shoshana. She always told me to call her if anyone ever can't pay their electric bill."

### **The Reason for Shoshana's Kindness**

Rafi got home and called Shoshana with his wife to thank her. Aunt Shoshana said, "Ten years ago, I had just lost my husband, and I was widowed with five kids and couldn't pay my bill. Some angel out of nowhere raised the money in two hours for me!! What an amazing power of the Jewish people. I told myself that when my financial situation was better, I would do the same for people struggling with their electric bill. I don't know anything about the boy that helped me, just that his name was Rafi."

Rafi told her he was the boy who helped her ten years ago. They both started to cry and wished each other heartfelt blessings, because they both recognized the power of Am Yisrael, always looking out for each other, and always eager to be inspired to serve Hashem.

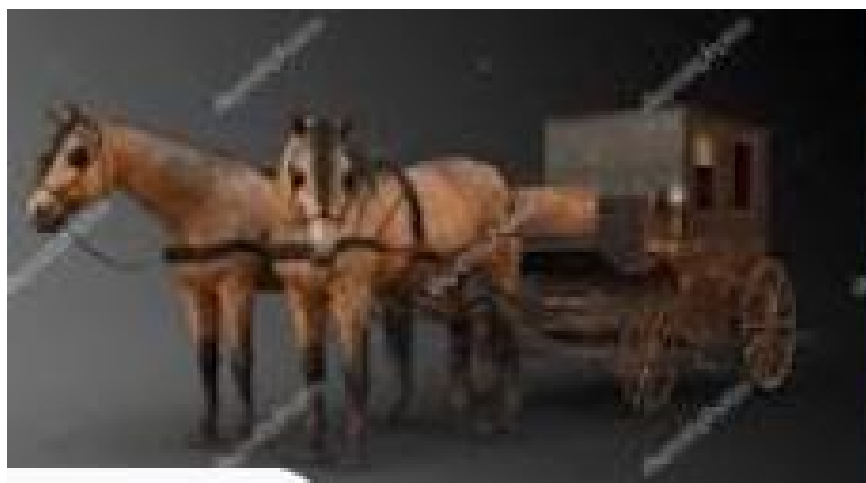
May we all be motivated to give as much as we can to others for altruistic reasons. May we maintain our synagogues with the highest level of decorum and kedusha so that we may be worthy of always having the Shechina rest among us. May we learn from Hashem to love Torah and never part with it. And may we

always know that there is so much more to learn and keep our childlike enthusiasm when learning Torah! Amen!

*Reprinted from the Parashat Terumah 5783 email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

# With Good Hearts

By Rabbi Yisroel Bronstein



The fundraiser of the Volozhin Yeshivah approached Rav Chaim of Volozhin with an issue to discuss. He related to Rav Chaim how one of the yeshivah's biggest supporters, a wealthy man who, year after year, never hesitated to donate generously, suddenly refused to offer even the slightest contribution.

Rav Chaim traveled to the wealthy man's home and asked to speak with him. "Why have you stopped supporting our yeshivah?" asked Rav Chaim.

"I will tell you," answered the wealthy man. "You see, I have always given happily to the Volozhin Yeshivah, knowing that my money was helping poor yeshivah students study Torah. The other day, however, your fundraiser pulled up to my home in a carriage drawn by two healthy-looking horses. "I thought to myself," continued the wealthy man, "that this horse-drawn carriage must also have been paid for by donations to the yeshivah — maybe even from my own money. To make sizable contributions, only that the money should be spent on horses, that I am not about to do!"

"My dear sir," responded Rav Chaim, "in this week's parashah of Ki Sisa it states, 'I have endowed him with a Divine spirit, with knowledge, understanding,

and inspiration, and with [the skill of] every craft; lachshov machashavos (to think thoughts), to work with gold, silver, and copper.’

“What is the wisdom of lachshov machshavos, of ‘thinking thoughts’? What exactly does it mean?

“When the donations for the Mishkan were being collected,” answered Rav Chaim, “there were some Jews who contributed graciously and with good hearts, and there were others who only gave reluctantly, after they were persuaded to do so.

“One of Betzalel’s unique gifts of wisdom was that he could discern which donations were given willingly and which were given grudgingly. From the donations that were given with enthusiasm, he made the sacred vessels of the Mishkan, but from those given reluctantly, he made the items of lesser importance.

“The same thing applies to a yeshivah,” concluded Rav Chaim. “The contributions that are given with a happy heart are used to support the young Torah scholars so they can study diligently. But the contributions that are given with a heavy heart are used towards buying horses.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas ki Sisa 5782 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “A Shabbos Vort.”*

# The Rav’s Ruling

By Estie Florans



Rav Tuvia Goldstein, rosh yeshivah of Yeshivah Emek Halachah and noted posek, was involved in numerous dinei Torah. There was a never-ending stream of people requesting that Rav Tuvia arbitrate for them, ranging from shalom bayis issues to business conflicts. Tempers often flared, and people got testy. It was



amazing, though, to observe the almost magical transformation that took place around Rav Tuvia's dining room table, with everyone, even the person who did not emerge the "victor," leaving satisfied.

Because together with the psak came an understanding of Rav Tuvia's love and search for emes. When someone feels that kind of truth, there's nothing left to oppose.

Mrs. Levine,\* the wife of Rav Tuvia's talmid, had a brother who was no longer frum. She wanted to know if she could invite Richard\* to join her family for the Seder, even though he would end up driving on Pesach.

### **Rav Tuvia's Psak for Richard's Participation**

Based on the situation that Mrs. Levine described, Rav Tuvia arrived at a psak: since Richard would be driving anyway, she could invite him, and perhaps, through participation at his sister's family's Seder, a spark toward Yiddishkeit would be reignited.

Mrs. Levine made sure to tell Richard that the question was presented to Rabbi Goldstein and the decision was derived only because of his halachic knowledge. (This is not a general psak. One should not derive from this incident whether it is permissible to invite a Jewish person who would drive on Shabbos or Yom Tov, but must follow his/her own rav's psak.)

Richard continued attending his sister's Seder each year. One Thursday, a few years later, Richard and Mrs. Levine's mother passed away in New York. The burial was scheduled to take place in Eretz Yisrael.

### **Another Psak Regarding Richard**

Mrs. Levine called up Rav Tuvia, frantic. Richard was out of town — and he would never forgive her if the funeral in New York took place without him. However, the time span necessary for Richard's arrival in New York would cause the kevarah to be delayed considerably.

After thinking about it, Rav Tuvia said, "I'm sorry, but this is the halachah. It is not permissible to wait...even if it means that your brother will miss the levayah. His feelings can't interfere with kavod hameis." (Again, this is not a general psak, but requires asking one's rav.)

Trembling, she dialed Richard's number and tearfully related Rav Tuvia's psak.

"If the rabbi who permitted me to join your Pesach Seder even though I had to travel won't allow you to wait so that I can attend Mom's funeral," Richard said, "I respect that."

Many years later, when Richard became ill and was lying on his deathbed, he told his brother-in-law, “Thank you for calling Rabbi Goldstein and allowing me to come to the Seder. Please thank him. He brought our whole family together.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas ki Sisa 5782 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “A Shabbos Vort.”*

## That “Special” Pair of Tefillin



Rav Dovid Tebel, zt”l, the Rav of Minsk, the author of Nachalas Dovid on Gemara, once related the following powerful story. A wealthy man became ill and passed away suddenly, while he was still young. Aside from his enormous wealth, he left over a very special pair of Tefilin that were written by an expert Sofer. These Tefilin alone were of great value.

As it sometimes occurs in families, a dispute arose between the surviving sons as to who should inherit the Tefilin. Rather than fight and become enemies, they decided to sell the Tefilin and split the proceeds evenly. In the meantime, the Tefilin were kept in a drawer in their father’s desk.

### **A Young Brother Puts on the Tefillin for His Bar Mitzvah**

One young brother had not yet become Bar Mitzvah. As the Bar Mitzvah of this young orphan was rapidly approaching, the brothers decided that nothing could be more appropriate than to give their father’s Tefilin to their little brother. The Bar Mitzvah boy put on the Tefilin with Simchah, realizing their value, both in a spiritual and sentimental sense.

They remained with him his entire life, and he never missed a day of putting on his special Tefilin, except for one time. The young boy grew up to become a wealthy businessman, and his business dealings required him to travel far and wide. Wherever he went, he had his Tefilin with him. They never left his side.

One night, while he was on the road, he got stuck in a blizzard. He was stuck in the snow and could not return to his hotel in the city. Also, because of all the snow, the roads would not be open for at least a day. He became very despondent. Not only did he not have his special Tefilin with him, he didn't have any Tefilin. How could he Daven? Where could he find a pair of Tefilin?

### **The Gentile Remembered an Old Jew in the Town**

The gentile he was doing business with tried to help. He remembered an old Jew who lived in the town they were in, and perhaps he had a pair of Tefilin the businessman could borrow. He immediately sought out this Jew, who was only too happy to lend his Tefilin to a fellow Yid.

Unfortunately, these Tefilin were ancient, and the color was fading. The old Yid had no idea who had written them. At best, they were Kosher B'di'eved. The businessman had no choice because there were no other Tefilin, so he used them. He still hoped that he would make it back to his hotel in time to use his own. However, this did not happen. This would be the only time in his life that he had not worn his father's Tefilin.

### **A Shocking Revelation from the Heavenly Tribunal**

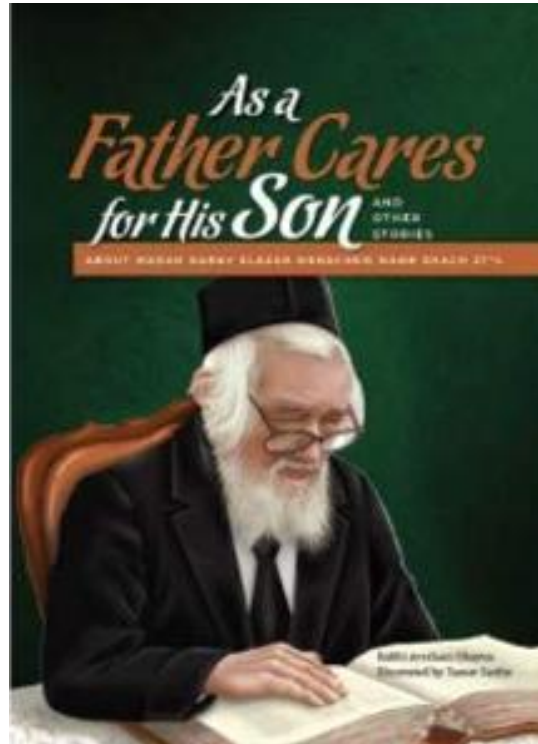
Life does not go on forever, and eventually, this businessman passed away and went to Shamayim for his final judgment. When he stood before the Heavenly Tribunal, his Neshamah was shocked to hear that he was a person who did not put on Tefilin in his lifetime! Apparently, in Shamayim, they were aware of something in his Tefilin that he was not aware of. The Tefilin that he thought were so exceptional, were in fact, Pasul, unfit and disqualified!

His Neshamah trembled as the prosecuting Malachim grabbed hold of him and were about to lead him off to his punishment in Gehinom. Suddenly, a different Malach came forward and declared, "Wait! I have some information to share. One time, this man was stuck in a snowstorm, and he borrowed an old pair of Tefilin that were Kosher! He is not a person who never put on Tefilin. He wore Tefilin once in his life!"

Rav Dovid concluded, "It was those old, faded Tefilin, that he put on one time in his life, that saved him from punishment in Shamayim!"

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tetzaveh 5783 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

# That Elusive Comment of Rav Akiva Eiger



One day, during the Shiur of Rav Elazar Shach, zt”l, he paused in mid-sentence, as if trying to recall something. The room was still and silent. Rav Shach was thinking. He said, “I know that Rav Akiva Eiger discusses this issue someplace, but, for some reason, I cannot seem to pinpoint it. Is there anyone here who knows where Rav Akiva Eiger discusses this subject?”

## **No One Came Up with the Answer**

Immediately, everyone began to speak. All the top Bochrin searched their minds for the elusive comments of Rav Akiva Eiger, which the Rosh Yeshivah did not know! No one came up with the answer.

Suddenly, from the back row, a Talmid, Reuven, walked up to Rav Shach with a Sefer. He was holding in his hands the Sefer Teshuvos Rav Akiva Eiger, and, with great confidence, he presented it to his Rebbe.

Rav Shach’s eyes lit up with delight! This boy, although he was a good student, he was not the most distinguished in the Yeshivah, but the smile that Rav

Shach gave him was priceless. It elevated his esteem before the entire Ponevezh Yeshivah. Reuven returned to his seat a changed person.

There was one other person in the Bais Medrash, Avraham, who was Reuven's Chavrusah, and he understood that something different than what it looked like had just taken place. Apparently, Reuven had been seriously involved in a Shidduch that had recently broken off. He had thought that he was getting engaged, and when it didn't work out, he was devastated. Word about this reached Rav Shach, whose concern for his students was incredible.

### **Expressed His Concern about Reuven**

Rav Shach called Avraham to his office and asked him about how Reuven was doing, and if he was getting over what had happened. Avraham explained that Reuven was coming to Seder to learn, but his heart was not into it. He was depressed, and his self-esteem had been affected.

Rav Shach thought for a moment and said, "We have to cheer him up."

The very next day, as Rav Shach was preparing to enter his office before giving the Shiur, he once again called Avraham over and asked him what they were learning that day. Avraham mentioned that they had come across an interesting commentary by Rav Akiva Eiger.

Rav Shach stopped him and said, "Hold it right there. That's perfect." During that Shiur, Avraham saw his Rosh Yeshivah, the great Rav Shach, "forget" a Rav Akiva Eiger, and have Reuven come and save him.

For many days after this, students would pass Reuven with looks of admiration, and perhaps even a bit of envy. This was the extent Rav Shach went to in caring for his Talmidim!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tetzaveh 5783 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

# **Taken For a Ride**

**By Rabbi Yechiel Spero**

It had not been expected. Reb Yaakov Tzvi Zusman was a well-respected shochet in the community that is now known as Neve Yaakov on the outskirts of Jerusalem. But one day, without any previous indication of heart trouble, the young man suffered a massive heart attack and died. His wife, Leah, was devastated and completely overwhelmed by sorrow and her feelings of inadequacy in coping with the daily struggles of survival.

Among those who came to console the young widow was the famed saddik of Jerusalem, Reb Aryeh Levine. He spoke with warmth and sincerity, offering to help in any way, and Leah was extremely grateful but never expected much to come of it. However, the morning after shivah, Reb Aryeh knocked on their door and offered to take the two young boys, the older of whom was six, to shul to recite kaddish in memory of their father.

### **Thrilled to be Going to Shul with Such a Kind Man**

The children were thrilled to be going to shul with such a kind and famous man and before long settled into a routine where Reb Aryeh would pick up the children early every morning and take them to shul. Incredibly, he did not want the young mother to over-tax herself and so he would also dress the young boys in the morning so that she would be able to take advantage of some extra precious moments of sleep. Binyamin, who was only six years old, will never forget how much he loved walking to shul in the Batei Brodie neighborhood. He would hold Reb Aryeh's hand and feel secure, knowing that he was being looked after.

One morning Reb Aryeh fell ill and was unable to pick up the boys. In his place he sent Yoel Brand to bring the boys to shul. Reb Yoel arrived at the house on time and managed to get the boys up and out. But halfway down the street, Uri, the younger brother, stopped and refused to walk any further. Binyamin tried his best to convince his younger brother to move on but the little boy was adamant.

### **Reb Yoel is Quite Confused**

Reb Yoel was beginning to question why he had gotten himself into this situation in the first place but reminded himself that he was doing a misvah. He tried every tactic he could think of but nothing was working. The little boy just looked down with a frown on his face and big sad, brown eyes. Reb Yoel felt terrible but he had tried everything and Uri wouldn't even tell him what was wrong. Exasperated Reb Yoel finally blurted out, "I don't understand it. You walk when Reb Aryeh picks you up. What's the problem?"

Uri looked up with tear-filled eyes and, revealing his childish innocence, said, "That's because every morning when Reb Aryeh picks me up, he carries me on his shoulders." Reb Yoel smiled. He should have known better. Of course, Reb Aryeh would have figured out how to find his way into this poor child's heart. He bent down and offered a ride. It was not Reb Aryeh's piggyback ride - but he took it anyway. (Touched By A Story 2)

*Reprinted from the Parashat Terumah 5783 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*