

# SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS BEHA'ALOSCHA 5784

Volume 15, Issue 43 16 Sivan 5784/June 22, 2024

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

For a free subscription, please forward your request to [keren18@juno.com](mailto:keren18@juno.com)

*Past emails can be found on the website – [ShabbosStories.com](http://ShabbosStories.com)*

## Shalom Bayit, to What Degree?



The main reason the ritual of sotah is done is to alleviate a husband's suspicions, to give him a sense of peace knowing his wife has remained faithful to him. As we mentioned, the kohen would write an oath and the name of Hashem on parchment, and he would submerge it in water, so the ink could flow freely and dissolve into the water.

Hashem is willing to go so far as to erase His holy name for the sake of shalom bayit. We learn from this how important it is to have peace in the household, but to what degree? How far can one go to preserve the peace?

There was once a man who called Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein with a question. He explained that his wife tends to do things with care, though very slowly, and

when he returns from kollel, he has to wait a long time for lunch. At times, the hunger is quite intense, and on this particular day, he was so hungry that he went to a meat restaurant, simply unable to wait to eat.

“Today, of all days, when I got home, my wife said to me, ‘Dear husband, I made a surprise for you,’ and on the table was a plate of cheese blintzes, which I love.” The man added he was not supposed to eat in a restaurant, knowing his wife was preparing him lunch, and on top of that, not eating the blintzes would lead to his wife being even more upset. He called Rav Zilberstein asking for a heter—halachic allowance to eat the dairy blintzes citing shalom bayit.

### **...Transgressing Other Prohibitions is Unacceptable**

The Rav responded, “For shalom bayit you could tell her that you ate meat at a Pidyon Haben, even though there was no Pidyon. However, permitting dairy after meat is out of the question. A small white lie for shalom bayit is okay, but transgressing other prohibitions is unacceptable.”

Hashem may be willing to erase His name on behalf of shalom bayit, but we must be cautious not to take advantage and use “keeping the peace” as an excuse for serious transgressions.

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

# **The Hosts of a Shivah House**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**

Moshe’s\* daughter had been in shidduchim for several years and had not yet found her zivug. Recently, Moshe’s friend lost a child who had been ill. He and his family did not have a place to sit shivah. Their apartment was very small, and they had no immediate relatives with bigger homes available to them.

Moshe discussed this sad situation with his wife, who suggested that they host the shivah. Moshe called his friend and offered the use of his home. The mourners were overcome with gratitude for this very heartwarming gesture. How many people would be willing to open their home for an entire week, to have total strangers walk in and out at all hours?

During the shivah, the bereaved parents made a point of telling every visitor of their hakaras hatov [gratitude to the family hosting them]. The mother knew how hard her hosts were trying to find a shidduch for their daughter, so she made it a point to tell the visitors how special she is and what an outstanding family she had.

One day, a woman drove in from another city, about an hour and half away, and she was told about this wonderful girl looking for a shidduch. She was very pleased with the report she heard and impressed by seeing her in action at the shivah home.

This woman's son was of marriageable age, and after some investigating by both sides, a meeting was set up between the two. The couple soon became engaged. Their great act of chessed, opening their home for someone else's shivah, was the means by which their yeshuah was sent. (excerpted from the ArtScroll book – "Living Emunah on Shidduchim")

*Reprinted from the Parshas Nasso 5784 email of the Weekly Vort.*

# **The Rav of Tuchin**

**By R' Yoni Schwartz**

In the 1920's, Rav Chaim Yokel Avraham Sova, ZT"l, was the leader of the massive Tuchin community in Ukraine. The custom was that at every wedding the Rav would officiate, and if he did not do so, it was a big red flag. There was a wealthy family making a wedding for their only daughter and wanted Rav Sova to attend.

However, when the Rav heard that their daughter would not be covering her hair at the wedding he refused. A few weeks later, people told him that his gabbai was paid a hefty sum to officiate at their wedding and pretend to be the community Rav. Despite being betrayed, the Rav would not get angry, and even push back against his followers who wanted to reprimand the gabbai, saying, "It's not a big deal."

## **A Dispute that Tore the Town Apart**

A couple of months later, the girl unfortunately passed away. The family was infuriated at the Rav because they thought he put a curse on their daughter after somebody told them Lashon Hara. Other people were mad at the family, "How can you accuse the Rav of intentionally trying to harm another Jew?"

The conflict was ripping the town apart. At sixty-two, after leading the town for over thirty years, Rav Sova decided he could not be the cause of a dispute and that peace was of paramount importance. He packed his bags and left with his family to a much smaller town.

Shortly after, when the Nazis came and decimated Tuchin, killing over 99,000 of the original 100,000 Jews, the Rav and his family were spared, all because he removed himself from a conflict.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Nasso 5784 email of Torah Sweets.*

# The Right Words – “I Don’t Know”

By Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson



**Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson**

A number of years ago, I was invited to a kumtitz for teenagers one Motzei Shabbos in Pomona, a neighborhood near Monsey. These were boys who'd generally be categorized as struggling teenagers and were studying in a particular yeshiva which provided the kind of warm environment and camaraderie they sought. There they were, about forty of them, sitting around a fire pit. Guitars, drums, some other instruments, roasted marshmallows, hot dogs and hamburgers abounded, as the boys sang several uplifting melodies. There was a majestic and magical energy between us all. I had been invited to join them and spend the evening together, sharing some words, and I was taking it all in.

In the middle of one song, a boy came over to me. He put his chair right near me and put his hand on my shoulder, as you can picture friends sitting around a campfire. He then said these words: “Rabbi YY, why did my mother die?”

I didn't expect such a question. I looked back at him, caught off guard, and said, “I'm sorry, when did she die?” “When I was eleven years old, nine years ago.

We had a family of eleven children. I was one of the older kids, with many siblings under me. We were living in London when she got cancer and passed away. She was a young woman in her forties. Tell me, why did my mother die? I was so close to her. I loved her and she loved me. She was such a good mother.”

### **“I’m So Sorry”**

I looked at him, as my hand went on his shoulder. “I don’t know why your mother died,” I said. “I’m so sorry.” But the boy wouldn’t have it that easy. “C’mon, tell me why! Why did she have to die?” I looked back at him. “I really don’t know. But I would love to be here with you. It must be so painful. Nine years later you talk about it, and yet I can’t give you an answer. But you know what? I can sing with you, I can cry with you, and I can listen to you.” He started to cry, I started to cry, and we sang together. He didn’t say another word after that.

About twenty minutes later, he turned to me with tears in his eyes, again. “You know, you’re the first one from dozens of people who said that they don’t know. And this was the answer that I’ve been waiting a decade for.”

### **You Were the First to Say, ‘I Don’t Know, But I Can Cry with You’”**

I wasn’t sure I understood. “What do you mean ‘this is the answer’?”

“I went to so many people,” he continued, “and everybody, and with good intentions, tried to explain to me some reason why my mother had died—whether it be relating to a gilul, neshama, gan eden, kapparah (atonement), tikkun—and it drove me mad. To me, it felt insensitive to my experience, even if they meant well. You were the first one to say, ‘I don’t know, but I can cry with you.’”

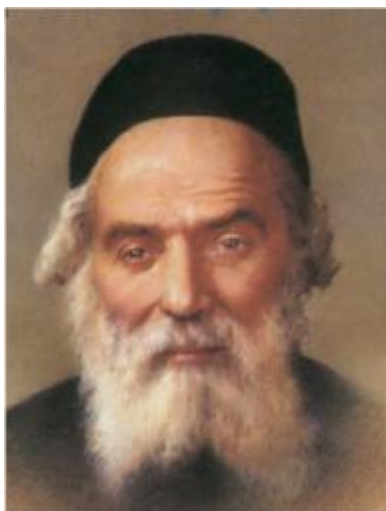
I realized at that moment how transformative those words had been for that boy. And indeed, this boy not only turned his life around, but became a powerhouse of inspiration and love for so many others.

Indeed, sometimes the right words, the right answer is, “I don’t know, but I can cry with you.” Those words say it all. They really do.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Emor 5784 edition of the TorahAnyTime Newsletter.  
Edited and compiled by Elan Perchik.*

# The Chofetz Chaim and the Crude Jew

By Rabbi Yissochar Frand



The Chofetz Chaim was once traveling and he stopped at a Jewish inn. Shortly after he arrived, an extremely boorish person entered. He sat down at a table and shouted at the innkeeper to bring him fried goose and vodka. When his food was set down in front of him, he devoured it without reciting a berachah, while acting abusively to everyone around him.

The Chofetz Chaim was aghast at this man's behavior, and he was about to go over and say something, when the innkeeper came over and said, "I must tell you something about this person."

## **The Boorish Jew Had Been a Cantonist**

We have all heard of the Cantonists, little children who were seized by the Russian authorities and taken to serve in the czar's army for 25 years. Life in that army was a living Gehinnom. Raised from the age of 7 or 8 in the company of coarse peasants, some of these children eventually succumbed to the pressure and converted to Christianity.

This man, the innkeeper explained, had not converted. But he didn't have even the most rudimentary knowledge of what it means to be a Jew. All he remembered from before he was seized was that he was Jewish.

The Chofetz Chaim walked over to the man's table and said, "I am jealous of your portion in Olam Haba. For you to remain a Jew after all you went through and not convert to Christianity is truly amazing. Your nisayon (test) was greater than that of Chananyah, Mishael, and Azaryah" (see Daniel Ch. 3). Upon hearing the Chofetz Chaim's words, the man started crying. From that day on, he became very attached to the Chofetz Chaim and eventually became a complete baal teshuvah.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Kedoshim 5784 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – "Rabbi Frand on the Parshah 3"*

## The Reincarnated Prince

By Tuvia Bolton



**Illustration by Michael Muchnik**

Some three hundred years ago, the name of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov spread throughout Europe as one who was willing to do anything, even perform miracles like Elijah and Moses, in order to help another, especially a fellow Jew.

One evening a middle-aged couple came with a desperate request; they wanted a child. Despite their prayers, good deeds and various remedies and treatments, they had failed to conceive a child in all the years of their marriage.

The Baal Shem Tov closed his eyes, put his face into his hands, lowered his head to the desk before him and his consciousness soared to the spiritual realms. Minutes later he sat upright, looked at them sadly and said: "There is nothing I can do. Continue praying, continue your good deeds. May G-d have mercy. But it is beyond my ability to help you."

The woman burst into bitter tears; her husband turned his face aside and wept silently, his body shaking.

### **Her Cry Pierced the Walls and Broke the Holy Master's Heart**

"No, no!" she cried. "I won't believe it. I will not accept no for an answer. I know that when a *tzaddik* (righteous person) decrees, G-d must fulfill. I want a child!" Her cry pierced the walls and broke the holy master's heart.

He lowered his head again for many long minutes then looked up and said: "Next year you will have a child."

The couple was speechless. The man began trembling, took the Baal Shem Tov's hand kissed it as his wife showered thanks and blessings. They backed out the door, bowing, weeping and praising G-d and His servant the holy Rabbi Israel.

Sure enough, two months later the woman conceived, and nine months thereafter gave birth to a beautiful baby boy.

### **The Baby's Development was Exceptional**

The couple's joy increased day by day as the child grew. Their baby was beautiful! His eyes sparkled with life and his every smile filled their lives with warmth and happiness. At the age of one year, it was obvious he was something special; he was already walking and talking. As he approached the age of two they began looking for a tutor to begin teaching him Torah. They planned to take him to the Baal Shem Tov; they would show him what his blessing had brought.

But on the morning of his second birthday the child didn't wake up.

The neighbors came running when they heard the screams, but nothing could be done. As miraculously as the boy had come, so mysteriously and tragically had he departed this world.

### **Informing the Baal Shem Tov of Their Terrible Tragedy**

The funeral was enough to make the heavens cry. After the week of mourning, they returned to the Baal Shem Tov to inform him of the tragedy. But the Baal Shem Tov understood better than they could possibly have imagined.



"Your child," he said to the grieving parents, "contained a lofty soul which had made a huge sacrifice to save thousands of people. But this soul needed you to achieve its *tikkun* ('rectification') and become spiritually complete. That day, when you came to me, I looked into the heavens and saw that it was impossible for you to have children; but when I heard your cries and saw the depth of your pain, I realized that this special soul was destined to be yours for the short span of its return to physical life. Sit down, dear friends, I have a story to tell you."

### **The Powerful and Rich King who Was Childless**

Several hundred years ago lived a king who was childless. He was rich and powerful, but he desperately desired a son to carry on the lineage. He ordered that all his subjects hold daily prayers in their houses of worship that G-d should grant their sovereign an heir.

One of his advisors suggested that the reason the king was childless was because his Jewish subjects did not pray for him sincerely enough. The only way to make them do that, said this advisor, was to oppress them.

The next day the king issued a public proclamation stating that if the queen was not blessed with a child within in the next three months, all the Jews would be expelled from his kingdom. With all the neighboring countries closed to Jewish settlement, the poor Jews had nowhere to go. Their cries and prayers rose from every synagogue in the land.

### **One Very Holy Soul Agreed to Make the Sacrifice**

A call resounded through the heavens for a soul willing to descend into the spiritually desolate environment of the royal palace in order to save the Jews of that land. Finally, one very holy soul agreed to make the sacrifice.

Shortly thereafter, the queen became pregnant and soon gave birth to a son. The king was overjoyed and showered the Jews of his realm with presents and favors.

At the age of two, the child could already read and write, and when he was five years old he had surpassed all his teachers and learned all they had to teach. A master teacher — a priest whose fame as a genius and scholar had spread far and wide — was brought from afar to teach the prodigy.

### **The Young Genius and His New Tutor**

This new tutor was of a different caliber altogether. It seemed that he had mastered every form of wisdom in the world and his very presence radiated a thirst for knowledge. The young genius could not get enough of his new teacher. He

became attached to him more than even to his own father the king. He spent every moment of the day and most of the night with him absorbing more and more wisdom and learning; and the more he absorbed the more he desired.

### **A Special Room for the Priest to Have Two Hours of Privacy**

But the priest demanded his times of privacy. He had an agreement with the king that for two hours of every day he would lock himself in his room and no one, not even the King himself, was allowed to enter or disturb him in any way. It was on this condition that he accepted the task of teaching the prince.

But the prince was curious. He could not tolerate the idea that his beloved master was withholding something from him. He had to know everything!

One day, the young prince managed to hide himself in his teacher's room before the priest's daily two hours of seclusion. The priest entered the room, locked the door securely behind him, and searched the room thoroughly. Somehow he failed to discover the prince's hiding place and he proceeded in his strange daily ritual.

### **Removed the Crosses from the Room**

First he removed all the crosses from the walls and from around his neck, and put them in a box outside his window. Then he took out a large white woolen shawl with strings at the corners, wrapped it completely around his head and body, and began weeping like a baby.

Then he took out two small black boxes with long black straps attached to them, tied one to his left upper arm and the other above the middle of his forehead. After that he began to pray, swaying, singing and crying for over an hour. Finally, he took out a large Hebrew text and began reading from it in a sing-song voice, swaying back and forth all the time.

Suddenly, he stopped and listened intently. The faint but unmistakable sound of another person in the room had caught his ear. The priest was terrified. He jumped from his chair, hurriedly removed the black boxes and shawl, stuffed them in a drawer, and began to search the room. It did not take long for him to discover his young pupil, who had been observing everything with rapt fascination.

### **Afraid of Being Beheaded by the King**

The priest begged the boy not to reveal what he saw. If the king found out he would certainly be beheaded. But the prince's curiosity had been aroused. He swore that he would never tell anyone what he saw in the room, but only if the priest would explain what he had just done and teach him what it was all about.

So the priest had no choice but to reveal that he was a Jew, doing what Jews have been doing for thousands of years: praying and studying the Torah and

fulfilling its commandments. He had been compelled to hide his faith during one of the many decrees of forced conversions that Jews were subjected to in those times; now he was forced to assume the guise of an alien religion on the pain of death.

"You must teach me your ancient wisdom!" the prince insisted. "I knew that you were hiding something from me. In everything that you taught me, I always sensed that there was something more there, something deeper and truer, that you were withholding from me!" In vain did the "priest" plead that he would be subjecting them both to mortal danger. "If you refuse to teach me," the prince threatened, "I'll tell everyone what I saw in this room."

For several years they learned Torah together, until the boy announced that he wanted to convert to Judaism. His desire became so strong that teacher and pupil made up a story about going to Rome to further their studies and instead escaped to another country where the boy converted and never returned to the palace again.

### **One Small Blemish Dimmed the Prince's Shining Perfection**

"The prince became a great and famous sage," the Baal Shem Tov concluded his story, "living a life of saintliness and good deeds. When he passed on from this world and his soul ascended to the heavens, it was the most luminous soul that had returned from earth in many generations.

Only one blemish dimmed its shining perfection: the lingering effect of the fact that it had been conceived, borne, and fed for two years in the spiritually negative environment of the royal palace. All it lacked to attain the true heights of its glorious potential was for it to return to earth and be conceived, given birth to and weaned in the holy atmosphere of a righteous home.

"When I saw the depth of your holy desire for a child, I know that you were worthy parents for this righteous soul."

Reprinted from the Parshas Nasso 5784 website of Chabad.Org,

## **Baal Shem Tov & Avigdor**

Some 300 years ago, there lived a wealthy man named Avigdor. He once brought a large sum of money to the Baal Shem Tov, to be distributed to the poor on his behalf. Accepting the contribution graciously, the Baal Shem Tov inquired if he would like a blessing in return. After all, the Baal Shem Tov was renowned not only as a great Torah scholar, but also as a righteous individual who had the power to give blessings.

"No thanks!" replied Avigdor arrogantly. "I am very wealthy; I own many properties, and I have servants, plenty of delicacies and everything else I want. I have more than I need!"

"You are very fortunate," replied the Baal Shem Tov. "Perhaps you would like a blessing for your family"?

"I have a large and health

y family of which I am very proud; they are a credit to me. I don't need anything".

"Well, then perhaps you can help me," inquired the Baal Shem Tov, "Can you please deliver a letter to the head of the charity committee in Brody"?

"Certainly," responded Avigdor. "I live in Brody and would be happy to assist the Rebbi in this matter".



**An artistic image of the Baal Shem Tov**

The Baal Shem Tov took out a pen and paper, wrote a letter, sealed it in an envelope and gave it to Avigdor. Avigdor took the letter, placed it in his jacket pocket and returned home. But he had so many projects on his mind that by the time he arrived in Brody he had completely forgotten about the entire encounter with the Baal Shem Tov.

Sixteen years passed, and the wheel of fortune suddenly turned. All of Avigdor's assets and properties were lost or destroyed. Floods ruined his fields of crops; fires destroyed his forests. He was left penniless. Creditors took his house and everything he owned. He was forced to sell even his clothing to feed his children.

One day, while cleaning out the pockets of an old jacket he planned to sell, he found the letter that he had received from the Baal Shem Tov 16 years earlier! In a flash, he recalled his visit and his haughtiness when he thought he had everything. With tears in his eyes, he rushed to finally fulfill his mission and deliver the letter.

The envelope was addressed to a Mr. Tzaddok, chairman of the charity committee of Brody. He ran into the street and encountered one of his friends. Grabbing his arm, he said, "Where can I find Mr. Tzaddok?"

### **Chairman of the Charity Committee**

"You mean Mr. Tzaddok, the chairman of the charity committee?"

"Yes, I must see him immediately!" replied Avigdor.

"He is in the synagogue," said Avigdor's friend. "I was there only a few minutes ago. Mr. Tzaddok is indeed a lucky man. Just this morning he was elected chairman of the charity committee."

"Tell me more about Mr. Tzaddok," insisted Avigdor.

Willing to oblige, Avigdor's friend continued, "Mr. Tzaddok was born and raised here in Brody. A tailor by profession, he was always down on his luck, never able to make a decent living. He was hardly able to support his family, and they always lived in poverty. He sat in the back of the synagogue, and no one ever took notice of him. Despite working many hours, he never earned much; it was hard for him to scrape together enough money for even a loaf of bread for his family.

Recently, however, the tide changed. Mr. Tzaddok was introduced to a local nobleman, and he made uniforms for all his servants. The nobleman was very satisfied with Mr. Tzaddok's craftsmanship, and his business started to pick up. He even received an order for 5,000 uniforms for the army. He became a rich man and gained respect in the eyes of the community. He did not forget his former poverty, and gave generously to many, taking an active role in communal affairs. Just this morning, he was unanimously elected chairman of the charity committee.

### **Handed Over a Letter Written by the Baal Shem Tov 16 Years Before**

Hearing this story, Avigdor hurried to the synagogue and found Mr. Tzaddok busy perusing the many requests for financial assistance. He handed Mr. Tzaddok the letter. Together they read the words of the Baal Shem Tov, penned 16 years earlier:

'Dear Mr. Tzaddok, The man who brought this letter is named Avigdor. He was once very wealthy, but is now very poor. He has paid for his haughtiness. Since just this morning you were elected chairman of the charity committee, I request that you do all you can to assist him, as he has a large family to support. He will once again become successful, and this time he will be more suited to success. In case you doubt my words, I give you the following sign: Your wife is expecting a baby, and today she will give birth to a boy.'

They had hardly concluded reading the letter when someone burst into the synagogue and exclaimed, "Mazel tov, Mr. Tzaddok! Your wife just had a baby boy!"

Thanks to the Baal Shem Tov's foresight, Avigdor once again became very affluent. This time, he remained humble and was admired by all.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Nasso 5784 edition of Inspired by a Story by Rabbi Dovid Caro.*