

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS KORACH 5782

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A Message in a Matchbook

By Fay Kranz Greene



I would like to tell you about something that I've been doing lately, and how I got some extraordinary help from Above to do it.

But first, a little background. My brother, Rabbi Shlomo Friedman, is director of Tzach, the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Crown Heights.

About a year ago, he came up with a useful item. It is a small rectangular cardboard envelope, very beautifully drawn and decorated with Shabbat candles on the front and on the back. There is also a sentence that these candles are in memory of our mother, Rebbetzin Miriam Tzimmel Friedman.

Inside this carton are two tea lights and a small box of kitchen matches, as well as a little colorful brochure explaining Shabbat candle-lighting and the blessings to be made.

You see, the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe began *mivtzoim*, a campaign to encourage mitzvot. The Rebbe issued a call to every Jew: Even if you are not fully committed to a Torah life, do a mitzvah. The value of one mitzvah will not be diminished by the fact that there are others you are not prepared to do. The Rebbe suggested 10 mitzvot, choosing ones that are central to Jewish life, and urged us to encourage as many people as we can to do these mitzvot. One is lighting Shabbat candles.

In the Merit of Her Mother

So recently, I decided that I would start carrying this cardboard envelope with the colorful brochure and tea lights in my handbag. If I met a woman who I thought would benefit from it, I would stop her and say, “Would you like a Shabbat candle-lighting kit? It’s free.” Most of the time, they say “No, thank you.” But then, I say, “This is in memory of my *mother*, who always lit her candles early.”

Somehow, as soon as I mention my mother, inevitably, everyone accepts. So, my mother is doing good deeds from Gan Eden, just as she did her whole life.

I did not particularly like the box of matches in the package because they were kitchen matches. I thought it needed a pretty matchbook. So, a few weeks ago, I went on a scavenger hunt for matchbooks. I walked up and down Harding Avenue, the main shopping street in Surfside, Fla., looking for them. But not one store had any. In desperation, I went into the cigar store, figuring for sure they would have them. The owner told me that matchbooks are out of stock for some reason and not available anywhere.

I couldn’t believe that, so I went home and turned to Amazon and put in a search for matchbooks. That’s the only word I used: “Matchbooks.”

You won’t believe what came up. Within two minutes, there was a matchbook. But definitely not an ordinary matchbook. It was bright-red and shiny, and imprinted in gold letters. Guess what was written on it? It’s so amazing! It said: “Shabbat Candles ... Add Your Light.”

The Miracle of the Unexpected Matchbooks

Shabbat candles. Add your light. It was a miracle! I never mentioned *anything* Jewish in my search. I just wrote “matchbook.”

Of course, I ordered 100 of them right away, and they now sit proudly in those lovely envelopes. If the woman I give one to seems inclined to talk a little, I tell her about how I got those matches. And everyone is inspired and asks if they can have more than one. I give them out happily.

I’m beginning to run a little low in my supply, so today I went on Amazon to reorder. Well, guess what? They didn’t appear in my search results! The only thing even close is incense. Hardly what I’m looking for.

I went back into my old orders, figuring I could just reorder, but nope. That, too, did not appear.

So, I have to think that maybe this was a one-time gift from G-d (and my mother) to start me out on my venture since I never did this before.

I am so thankful that I am now able to do my small part in helping Jewish women and girls to start lighting Shabbat candles. I am hoping that those beautiful shiny matchbooks will be the catalyst.

And now, how about you? Can you add your light? And if you already light Shabbat candles, maybe you can share this beautiful mitzvah with someone else. Do it for my mother.

Reprinted from the Parshas Beha'alosecha 5782 website of Chabad.Org

The Butcher and the Doctor

Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita, cites an incident that occurred in the city of Slutzk, Belarus, during the Ridbaz's tenure as Rav (prior to his emigration to Eretz Yisrael, where he became Rav of Tzefas).

The butcher in Slutzk was an honourable, G-d-fearing man. He was respected by all, and, as a result, he did quite well financially. The Jews of Slutzk were not all Orthodox. Sadly, a contingent of secular Jews had long reneged on such time-honoured laws as kashrus and Shabbos.

In fact, for the most part, these men were heretics who denied the very existence of the Creator. One day, one of the community's distinguished physicians – a maskil, secular Jew, who believed in very little and observed even less – visited the butcher shop. He certainly was not there to purchase kosher meat.

The Butcher's Reluctance to Make More Business

The butcher told him that he would be happy to serve him at another time. He was presently leaving the store to go learn in the shul.

“How do you allow yourself to leave on a Thursday which is probably the most lucrative day of the week?”

The butcher answered that he had made enough money that day.

“What about the people who count on you?”

“I am not worried about them, since they will come tomorrow,” the butcher answered. “Furthermore,” he said, “I am more concerned with my portion in Olam Habba, the World-to-Come, than the few extra roubles that I would earn in this world.”

When the doctor heard this, he asked, “Since I do not believe in Olam Habba, can I sell you my portion?”

“Sure,” the butcher replied. “How much do you want for it?”

“One rouble – that is all I think it is worth,” the heretic said.



The butcher agreed to the sale and immediately handed over a rouble. The deal was forgotten, as the two men went about their individual lives. Years passed, and the doctor passed away.

One morning, shortly after the doctor had left this world, a woman presented herself at the butcher store and introduced herself as the doctor’s widow. “I need your help,” the woman said. “My husband passed on to his eternal rest. The last couple of nights he has been appearing to me in a dream with the same request every night; ‘Buy back the Olam Habba that I sold.’”

The Physician’s Argument

Apparently, he is about to be sent to Gehinnom, purgatory. He claimed that, as a physician, he had helped many people and even saved lives. Surely, that should count for some merit.”

The response was that, indeed, he had some merit, but alas, he had

sold his Olam Habba for one rouble. There was nowhere for him to go other than purgatory. After much pleading, his neshamah was given permission to contact his widow, so that she could “retrieve” the Olam Habba he had sold.

The butcher was called to the Rav.

Wants the Increased Value Of the Doctor’s Olam Habba

After listening to the woman, the butcher said, “Veritably, when I purchased your husband’s Olam Habba, I did not think that the portion was worth more than a rouble. Now that I hear what he has experienced in Heaven, I realise that he had many more merits than I thought. Thus, his Olam Habba is worth much more than a rouble. I will not sell it back unless I receive a premium on my purchase price.”

When two Jews present their case to a bona fide Rav, he will convene a bais din to adjudicate and resolve all issues. The Ridbaz instructed both parties to return later that day to present their cases. The three judges listened, then adjourned to a room to discuss the case. Half an hour later, they returned.

The Lutzker Rav, who was the rosh, head, of the bais din, spoke, “The final judgment is broken into three

parts. First, one cannot sell his Olam Habba, because it is not his to sell. Olam Habba is part of a person. He performs a mitzvah; the mitzvah illuminates his soul and becomes a part of him. It is not an external saleable object. It is he himself!

Second, one who is prepared to sell his Olam Habba loses it. Such a person removes himself from those worthy of a portion in the World to Come. He has forfeited his chance. He has demonstrated a disbelief that his neshamah will enter a better world.

Third, we cannot ignore that as a result of this entire fiasco, the community of Slutzk's emunah, faith, in Olam Habba, was seriously elevated and strengthened. This alone is reason for the neshamah to warrant Gan Eden. Indeed, in this transaction, both the butcher and the doctor share an equal partnership.

Reprinted from the Parshas Behaaloscha 5782 email of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum's Peninim on the Torah.

The Legendary Mashgiach of the Lomza Yeshiva



Rabbi Moshe Rosenstein

The Lomza Yeshivah [in Poland], founded in 1883, was unique for many reasons, among them - in its later years - the unusual tzidkus and

yashrus (saintliness and integrity) of the Mashgiach, R' Moshe Rosenstein zt"l. [1881-1940)

Whoever learned in the Lomza Yeshivah will never forget the way the Mashgiach walked the aisles between the shtenders for hours on end. The Yeshivah probably had one of the longest batei medrashim of all the yeshivos in Europe, stretching scores of meters lengthwise from the entrance door at the rear to the "Mizrach vant" (Eastern Wall) all the way upfront.

For hours, the Mashgiach would pace that aisle back and forth, for miles - literally - every single day. Among the products of his pure intellectual searching was his intense love for Hakadosh Baruch Hu. One of the talmidim recalls: "We talmidim knew

that before us stood a holy man of the highest madreiga, whose mind never entertained a machshava beteila (idle thought).

A Genius in Mussar and Kedusha

In spite of his effort to hide his tzidkus, we were keenly aware of his genius in mussar and kedusha. We were certain that he had overcome any tendency to material, earthly desires, for he was totally immersed in spirituality and the ways of Hashem.”

The city of Lomza was located on a hilltop, at the foot of which runs the Narev River. Every morning, R’ Moshe would stand at his window, quietly contemplating and watching the sun rise across the river, to appreciate the glory of the renewal of Maaseh Bereishis, the Almighty’s act of Creation.

Able to Perceive What Others Could Not See

Through his great Yiras Shamayim and humility, he was able to perceive things that normal human beings could not. Unlike the common practice of swaying during davening, he would stand motionless, ramrod straight, during the entire davening.

His Shemona Esrai was a lesson in total devotion and concentration. One Friday morning, after Shemona Esrai, he suddenly broke out weeping, whispering, “We’ve lost him!” Nobody knew what he was referring to. Four hours later, a telegram arrived

that the holy Chofetz Chaim zt”l was niftar.

One day, as R’ Moshe was walking back and forth in the Yeshivah aisle, he suddenly stopped and announced, “This week no one should go swimming!” (During the summer, the boys would go swimming in the river, especially on Fridays.) One boy did not hear the Mashgiach’s statement - or for whatever reason chose to ignore it and went swimming - and drowned.

The Professor’s Question

R’ Moshe’s ability to “read” faces was legendary. Once a professor of psychology met him and asked how one can recognize the face of a murderer. Sometimes his facial features and expressions are so delicate, you would never think that the man is capable of brutality.

R’ Moshe replied, “To a murderer, killing a person is like slicing a piece of challah, like killing a fly. Yet, at some point in his life, this same man is struck with a spark of remorse, a moment of teshuvah, and then there is a change in his face. He no longer has the face of a murderer. That is the sensitivity you discern.”

One of the bachurim in Lomza was a boy named Aaron Gildin, a happy fellow whose face was always graced with a smile. He would greet people with a pleasant countenance and kind words, a pure and gentle soul.

On one occasion, he entered the Mashgiach’s room to ask him if he

would like to send a telegram to a talmid in honor of his chasuna (wedding).



Undated photograph of Rabbi Yechiel Mordechai Gordon (left) and Rabbi Moshe Rosenstein (right) with students outside the Lomza Yeshiva

R' Moshe was happy to oblige and after he wrote the text for a message, the Mashgiach dismissed the boy. Suddenly, he turned to his son-in-law, R' Leib Pruskin zt"l, who was present in the room at the time, and asked him if he had noticed anything unusual about Aaron Gildin's face.

R' Leib replied, "No. He seems as happy as ever."

The next day, Friday, Aaron began to experience terrible pains. A doctor was summoned, but he could not determine the cause. On Shabbos, the boy requested to see the Rosh Yeshivah and the Mashgiach. The Rosh Yeshivah, R' Yehoshua Zelig Ruch zt"l, came at once (R' Yechiel Mordechai Gordon zt"l was then in America).

The bochurim hesitated disturbing the Mashgiach, but R' Leib Pruskin, recalling his father-in-law's remark the day before, called R' Moshe at once. After talking to the boy for a minute, the Mashgiach asked everyone to leave the room, and then continued to talk to Aaron for several hours. The bochur then turned his head to the wall, and returned his pure neshama to heaven, leaving this world in a state of teshuvah.

Reprinted from the Parshas Beha'alosecha 5782 email of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman's Torah Tavlin.

Judging Others Favorably #188

Did You Really Say That?

By Yehudis Samet

Shlomo Singer was a pensioner looking for some worthwhile way to use his spare time. He decided to devote himself to helping out new immigrants. Since he was very handy, he offered them his household repair services free of charge. Not only did he give his time on a volunteer basis, he even supplied these newcomers with the raw materials necessary for the various jobs he undertook.

This went on for years. His neighbors got wind of his benevolence and as a result, he was interviewed by a local radio station. The interview took place in his home.

The next day, his family and friends gathered around and hung on to every word as they listened to the interview being broadcast. “And how did you get involved in this?” the announcer’s voice was heard asking Mr. Singer, who explained patiently how the idea had come to him.

After sharing interesting stories of incidents that happened over the years, Mr. Singer was asked, “And how do the people react to what you do for them?”

There was a pause. “They really don’t care,” was Mr. Singer’s surprising response.

All the people in the room listening raised their eyebrows as Mr. Singer sat dumbfounded. At the end of the broadcast, one of the relatives turned to him and said, “Shlomo, don’t the people appreciate what you do for them?”

“They certainly do!”

“So why did you say they don’t really care?”

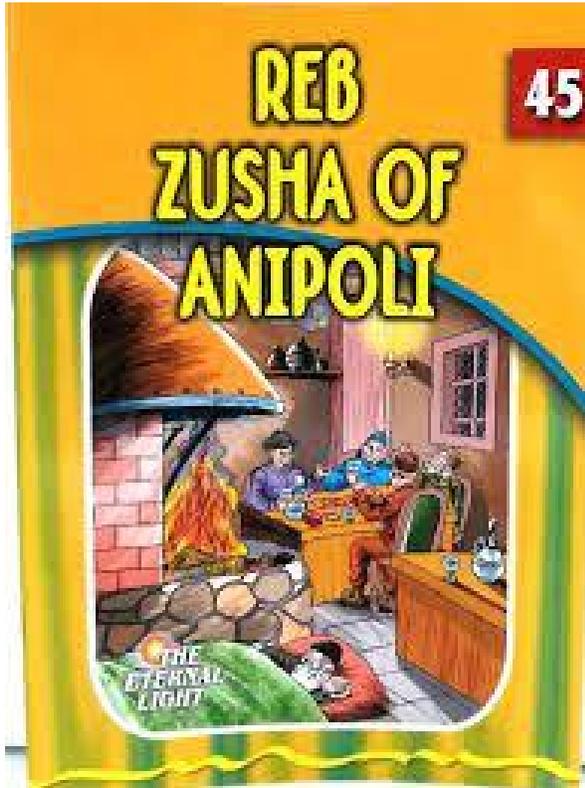
“I’m telling you I never said it. These people can’t do enough for me. They’re always giving me presents, also for my wife and children. They thank me for even the smallest of favors.”

Yet it was hard to deny. They all – himself included – had heard him say it. What could have gone wrong? he wondered. How could he have maligned those good people with whom he had developed such a strong mutual affection?

Then he remembered something the interviewer had mentioned to him before he left: “We have only a twenty-minute slot and this interview is much longer, so we’ll have to splice part of what you said.” (The Other Side of the Story by Mrs. Yehudis Samet, published by ArtScroll)

Reprinted from the Parshas Behaaloscha 5782 email of The Weekly Vort.

Two Reb Zusha of Hanipoli Stories



Reb Zusha of Hanipoli sat in his home immersed in his Torah learning, when the sounds wafting caused him to glance out the open window. Passing in front of his house was a wedding procession leading the bride and groom on their way.

Reb Zusha immediately stood up and went out into the street where abandoning constraint he danced with unbounded joy. He circled the young couple and the other celebrants for a few minutes of great simcha and then returned to his home and his study.

His family members watched his actions with great interest. They suggested to him that his dancing before a wedding procession was unbecoming a person of his stature in the community.

The Maggid of Zlotchov

To their comment he replied, "Let me tell you a story. When I was young I studied under the famous Maggid of Zlotchov, Reb Yechiel Michel.

One day I did something against his wishes and he rebuked me severely. I was terribly hurt by his reaction, and he, sensing anguish, soon came over to me and apologized for the harshness of his response, saying, 'Reb Zusha, please forgive me for my angry words.'

"I was very comforted by his apology and replied, 'Of course, I forgive you, Rebbe.'"

A Second Request for Forgiveness

"The same night before I went to sleep, he again came to me and asked my forgiveness. I was surprised, and repeated that I forgave him totally.

"I lay in bed for a while thinking about the incident, when the father of my Rebbe, Reb Yitzchak of Drohovitch, appeared to me from the

Next World. He said to me, ‘I had the merit to leave behind me in the world below my only son, and you want to destroy him because he insulted you?’

“Please, Rebbe, don’t say such a thing! I don’t want to hurt him and I have certainly forgiven him completely and wholeheartedly! What more can I do than I have already done?”

Still Not Complete Forgiveness

“What you have done is still not complete forgiveness. Follow me and I will show you the real meaning of complete forgiveness.’

“So, I got out of my bed and followed him until we reached the local mikva. Reb Yitzchak told me to immerse myself three times, each time saying and feeling that I forgave his son.

“I obeyed his wishes and immersed 3 times, each time with the intention of forgiving my Rebbe. “When I emerged from the mikva I looked at Reb Yitzchak and saw that his face was so radiant that I was unable to gaze upon it. I asked him where that light came from and he replied:

‘All my life I have carefully observed three things to which the Sage Rabbi Nechunya ben HaKana attributed his long life: he never sought honor at the expense of the degradation of his fellow; he never went to sleep without forgiving anyone who might have offended or injured him that day;

he was always generous with his money.

“Reb Yitzchak then told me that the very same level which can be achieved through these things can also be reached through joy. “And that is why when I saw the wedding procession passing in front of our house, I ran outside to partake of the festivities and to add to the simcha of the bride and groom.”

How Can One Make a Blessing on Bad News

Once Rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg came to his Rebbe, Reb Dov Ber of Mezerich, with an inquiry: “How is it possible to fulfill the teaching of our rabbis that one is obligated to say a blessing on bad news just as one would on good news?”

The Maggid answered him by instructing him to go to the shul. “When you get there ask for Reb Zusha of Hanipoli and ask him to explain that dictum to you.”

Reb Shmelke did as his Rebbe told him, and when he found Reb Zusha he asked him the question. Reb Zusha was a man who had endured great hardship throughout his entire life.

He replied to Reb Shmelke as follows: “I am very surprised that my rebbe sent you to me, of all people. A question like yours should be addressed to a person who has, G-d-forbid actually experienced something terrible in life. Whereas I, thank G-d, know nothing about those frightful

things. You see, I have experienced nothing but good all my life. I'm sorry, but I cannot answer your question since I know nothing about evil occurrences."

Reb Shmelke returned to the Maggid with his question answered. He now understood the meaning of the teaching that one is obliged to bless the evil that occurs in life as well as the good, for when man accepts a Divine edict with complete faith and trust, there is no longer a perception of evil inherent in the experiences.

Reprinted from the Parshat Tazria 5782 edition of L'Chaim Weekly, a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.

Story # 1273

An Irresistible Team

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles



Stamp of the Maharash

Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn, the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe known as **the Maharash**, would often go driving in his carriage in the countryside. On his way he always passed through a certain village near Lubavitch, although he never stopped off at the inn there which was owned by a Jew.

On one occasion, though, he asked the driver to stop the carriage outside it, climbed down and entered the inn, but found no one there apart from two small children.

"Where are your father and mother?" he asked them.

"They've gone to take care of different things," they replied. "They'll probably be back soon."

"And where is your *melamed* (tutor)?"

"Our tutor had gone off home," they said, "because now we have the Month of *Elul* vacation."

"Tell me, what do you learn with the tutor?"

"I learn *Chumash* (The Five Books of Moses)," said the older one.

The Ability of the Younger Brother to Read Tehillim

"And I," said his younger brother, "can read *tehilim* (psalms)."

"Very well," said the rebbe, "Then let me test you. Could you bring me a copy of *Tehilim*?"

They at once bought him the Book of Psalms. He opened it, and told them to read aloud, and as they read, he read along with them, word by word, and so on through a number of passages.

Meanwhile, on her way home, their mother was surprised to see the rebbe's carriage standing near the front entrance. She entered the house through the kitchen, from where she could hear the rebbe saying *tehilim* with her children; she did not dare to join them. And as she listened to a sadness in the rebbe's voice, her heart was so moved and her spirit so troubled, that without quite knowing why, she broke into tears.

The rebbe closed the *Tehilim* and was about to leave. But when he reached the door he paused there for several minutes, then returned to the table and said: "Children, let us read some more *Tehilim*."

The Rebbe Returns to the Town of Lubavitch

So, they opened the book again, and together read several more passages, as before. Finally, saying "*Shalom*," he mounted his carriage and drove back to Lubavitch.

This incident left the lady of the house all astir, and she waited anxiously for her husband to come home so she could tell him about it.

But her husband was not to be seen. He had gone to a neighboring village to collect debts from a few peasants and was due home at some time in the afternoon – but as the hours dragged on and night fell, his wife and children began to fear the worst.

At midnight they were alarmed by a sudden knocking on the shutters. Fearing the worst, the terrified woman ran to open the door. Her husband took one step in, and fell to the floor in a swoon.

When he came to, he told them what had happened.

He had come to the door of one of his creditors in the village, and was asked to accompany the householder to the barn, so that he could measure out a quantity of the newly harvested grain in payment of his debt, according to the custom of those times.

As soon as they were both inside, the peasant closed the door from within, and told the Jew that he intended to kill him. At first the Jew took it to be some kind of a joke, since they had known each other for so long, but he became convinced soon enough that the peasant meant exactly what he said. He fell at his feet and begged for his life.

The Stubborn Non-Jewish Peasant

"When I make up my mind," said the peasant, "I don't change it."

He started hunting around the barn for his ax, but could not find it. Then he recalled that he had left it in the house, but being afraid that the Jew might escape while he went to fetch it, he took the reins that were hanging on a nail, tied him up tightly hand and foot, closed the door somehow with a stick, and headed for the house.

A minute later, the peasant's wife, who had been working in the fields, opened the barn door, and saw the Jew trussed up in ropes. He told her what had happened, and with tears of desperation pleaded with her to release him. This request threw the poor woman into agitated confusion. "My husband doesn't fool around. He is a violent robber," she said. "If he figures out that it was I that freed you, he'll kill *me*."

The Jew was not to be silenced; he continued to beg and implore her, but she was too afraid. Then he had an idea; he suggested that she quickly free him and then rush back to the fields. Then, when she saw her husband leaving the house on his way back to the barn, she should come to meet him, as if she were coming from the fields to the barn for the first time.

The Peasant's Wife's Clever Idea

At last, finding herself unable to harden her heart to resist his appeals and clever idea, she deftly untied his bonds and let him out of the barn. Then quickly returned to the fields as he had suggested.

Also, she advised him in return not to take the main road home, for then her husband, not finding him in the barn, would surely chase after him and kill him on the highway. Rather, he should hide for a few hours among the loosed sheaves in the fields, and find his way home only when night fell.

He did so. Soon after, from his hiding place he heard the murderous peasant, panting and fuming, bolt from the direction of the barn in search of him.

Terror overcame the poor innkeeper. The peasant, ax in hand, was right next to him. Death was a moment away.

But the peasant did not see him through all the grass and sheaves, and after pacing up and down along the highway he saw that his quarry had disappeared, and stomped back to his house in a rage.

Trembling all over, the Jew waited for night to fall. He freed himself noiselessly from the sheaves, and clambered through bushes and brambles, slowly, stealthily, until at midnight he finally reached home.

When his wife now told him of the rebbe's visit, they both could now understand what it was all about. During the first reading of *tehilim* he had been saved from being killed in the barn, and during the second reading, from death among the sheaves. The holy words, as recited by the *tzadik* in combination with the two pure innocent children, had overcome the evil plot.

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*Source:* Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *A Treasury of Chassidic Tales*, as translated by R. Uri Kaploun from *Sipurei Chasidim* by Rabbi S. Y. Zevin. I also added the final sentence.

*Biographical note:* **Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn** [of blessed memory: 2 Iyar 5594 - 13 Tishrei 5643 (1834-Sept. 1882 C.E.)], the fourth Lubavitch Rebbe, known as the **Rebbe Maharash**, was the youngest of the seven surviving sons of his predecessor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, the *Tsemach Tsedek*.

*Connection:* Tuesday of this week, 2 Iyar, is the birthdate of the Rebbe Maharash.

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**18<sup>th</sup> Century German Megillah (Scroll of) Esther that was sold in the 2013 Sotheby's Judaica Auction in 2013 for \$25,000.**