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Rebbe Shlomke and the Benefit of Being Shamed



Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zt'l was near the Kosel, sitting among the paupers (as he would do at times) and somebody came by and gave a small coin to everybody. This man didn't know Rebbe Shlomke, thought he was a pauper like the others, and gave Rebbe Shlomke a small coin too.

When the man left, Rebbe Shlomke gave his coin to the man sitting next to him.

"Why didn't you tell him that you aren't poor?" the man asked.

Rebbe Shlomke replied, "I didn't want to lose out on the opportunity to get some shame."

Once, Rebbe Shlomke's granddaughter came to him and told him how she and her family were suffering immense poverty. They almost didn't have bread to eat.

Rebbe Shlomke advised her to daven at the Kosel. She went there and poured her heart out, with piercing sobs and loud tefillos. In that era, the Kosel plaza was just a small area, and her shouts disturbed one of the women standing nearby.

"Sha! Sha!" The lady kept shouting at her, but to no avail. She continued crying out all of her pain in her prayers. When she left the Kosel, the lady asked her, "What did you think? That the entire Kosel is yours? Why can't you pray silently? There are other people around who have their own tefillos they want to say. They don't want to hear yours..."

And she disgraced her some more in this manner. Rebbe Shlomke's granddaughter bore the shame in silence and didn't answer back. On the way home, she found a Napoleon coin, which could support her family for the next half a year.

She came to Rebbe Shlomke and said, "Baruch Hashem, Hashem heard my tefillos and sent me the money. But why did I have to undergo all that shame?"

Rebbe Shlomke explained to her that the shame was the beginning of her salvation. "Hashem heard your prayers, and therefore, Hashem sent someone to shame you. That was the beginning of your salvation, because shame has the power to remove all forms of troubles and hardships from you and from your family. And after the matter was rectified, you found the money."

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.

The Rich Man's Snuff Box

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton



Antique snuff box

There was once a very wealthy Chassid who was known for his holiness and erudition. We will call him Reb Yaakov. One day, Reb Yaakov was standing before the Baal Shem Tov (Besh't) almost in tears.

"I can't understand it" he moaned "Everything I do is failing. I used to have such business sense. It's as though I've been cursed! Has someone cursed me?"

The Besh't said nothing. Reb Yaakov tried to wait for an answer but the silence was unbearable.

"Every time I make an investment it fails. Every hunch I have is wrong. I'm losing money hand over fist! If it keeps up I'll lose it all. What should I do?!"

The Besh't looked up at him sadly and said. "Do you have a snuff box?"

"Of course!" He replied as he nervously fumbled in his jacket pocket producing a small, finely decorated, golden box that he proceeded to open.

But the Besh't paid no attention and continued.

"About a half year ago you were sitting in Shul (synagogue) with some of your friends you took that box out and offered them snuff. Do you remember? "I... I don't.. that is...almost every day some of us we sit together after Shachrit (morning prayer) and ...

"Do you remember about a half a year ago that you took out your snuff box and offered everyone to take a bit of snuff but when you saw the Shul beggar get

up from his seat in the corner and approach to take some you closed it and put it back in your pocket. Do you remember?"

Reb Yaakov was deep in thought he tried not to remember but suddenly it was clear as day. He didn't want that bum to get too close. He looked smelly and disgusting. Not only that but he had been in the middle of telling a joke to his friends and didn't want to disturb it.

"Well", concluded the Besh't "Maybe it meant nothing to you at the time because your success and wealth blinded you and hardened your heart! But you really shamed that man to the essence of his being. So, it was decided in heaven that you will lose all your money you and be given to him!"

Reb Yaakov was stunned, he couldn't believe his ears! But it was happening, it was true! He was losing everything at a frightening pace and now that he thought about it, he hadn't see that beggar for months. He seemed to have disappeared. It was a curse all right; but it was he that had cursed himself!!

As in a dream he looked at the Besh't imploringly and stammered "Is there any way I can..."

"There is only one way you can get your money back." The Besh't said. "You have to reverse the process. If you find him and ask him for a pinch of Snuff and he refuses you.. then he will lose it all, just as you did, and your wealth will return. But if not everything is lost."

Reb Yaakov returned home and his bad luck continued. Within a few more weeks he lost everything including his house and belongings just as the Besh't said he would.

It was then that he discovered that that Shul beggar (whose name was Issac) had, in fact, miraculously become a rich businessman 'overnight', was now making daring million-dollar investments and was surrounded by some of the wealthiest men in the country.

Several times Reb Yaakov, who was now a pauper, considered just going up to Mr. Isaac when he left his house in the morning and asking him for snuff but decided against it. He would wait for a better opportunity... a time when Isaac was busy.

And finally, it came.

One morning on the Shul bulletin board was an open invitation to everyone in the city, in two weeks, in the massive town square to the wedding of Mr. Issac's daughter!!! A real G-dsend!!

Two weeks later Reb Yaakov was there with a foolproof plan.

The wedding ceremony was just about to begin, the band played solemnly and then stopped as the couple stood under the wedding canopy with hundreds of people gathered around. The Rabbi finished all the blessings, the groom broke the glass cup, the band broke into joyous playing and everyone began dancing, shaking

the hand of the groom and the father of the bride, slapping them on the shoulders and yelling Mazal Tov!!! Isaac was surrounded by people, smiling, shaking hands. Totally occupied!!!

And at that very moment; at the height of the festivities Rab Yaakov ran up, pushed through the guests to Mr Issac, tapped him on the shoulder and said

"Give me a pinch of snuff!"

Mr. Isaac looked at him strangely hesitated, turned back to the person that he had been speaking to (aha!! He's ignoring me!! Thought Reb Yaakov!!) said 'excuse me and turned around, snuff box in hand and offered it!"

Reb Yaakov fainted. A doctor was called. He was carried to a side room and after a few minutes Mr. Issac appeared.

"He'll be alright" said the doctor. "Maybe it was too warm or something."

"But why is he weeping?" Mr. Isaac asked.

"I'll tell you why" Reb Yaakov replied weakly. Remember me? I'm the rich man that refused to give you a pinch of snuff a while ago in Shul and because of that I lost all my riches and you gained them. Well, just now when you didn't act selfishly as I did back then I lost my only chance to regain my wealth." And he resumed crying bitterly.

But the story has a happy ending.

When Mr. Isaac heard the story he calmed Reb Yaakov down, invited him to the wedding feast and assured him that he had nothing to cry about. He would provide him with a home and a job for the rest of his life.

Reprinted from the Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.

The Chassid's Request For a Blessing of Wealth

Reb Yitzchak, a student of Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin zy'a, was also extremely poor. His wife asked him to go to Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin to tell him about their financial plight. Reb Yitzchak followed her advice, and he went to his Rebbe for Shabbos.

On Shabbos, one is obligated to forget all financial woes, and Reb Yitzchak did so. He put aside all his problems and dedicated himself entirely to avodas Hashem. But then, on Motzei Shabbos, when he said goodbye to the Rebbe he was still in on a spiritual high, and forgot to ask the Rebbe for a brachah for parnassah.

Only after Reb Yitzchak returned home and saw his hungry children, did he remember that he hadn't accomplished the purpose of his trip. His wife urged him to return to the Rebbe again. He returned, and this time remembered to tell the Rebbe about their financial plight.



The Rebbe said, "Take these two gold coins and buy meat, fish and other good food, sufficient for two meals for one person. Then go home, and eat your meals. But you may not give food to anyone; not even to your wife and children. You must eat all the food yourself. After you do this, return here again, and I will bless you with wealth."

Reb Yitzchak came home, and sat at his table to eat the good food he bought. His children stood around the table and watched him as he ate. His heart went out for them. They were so hungry. He was so tempted to give them... But he

wasn't permitted to give them anything. With great difficulty, he finished his two meals and returned to Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin.

The Rebbe blessed him with wealth, but there was a condition. The Rebbe said, "Whenever you sit down to eat, you must remember the two meals you ate in front of your hungry children. You must think, 'How can I enjoy food when outside there are hungry Yidden?'"

Reb Yitzchak said, "If that's the condition, I forgo the wealth, than to endure that terrible feeling again."

Reb Yitzchak went home and told his wife what he decided. She quickly went to the Rebbe and begged for *parnassah*. The Rebbe promised that she and her husband will become wealthy.

Indeed, a few days later, Reb Yitzchak became fabulously wealthy. He never ate at home. He ate with the paupers in the communal kitchen, so he could always have their needs in mind. He only ate at home when his children got married,

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.

Hidden and Revealed

By A. H. Glitzenstein

It is a tradition that in every generation there are hidden *tzaddikim* ("righteous ones") who conceal their greatness from the eyes of men and live amongst us disguised as simple, ignorant folk.

Rabbi Gershon Kitover once asked his famous brother-in-law, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem, to show him one of the hidden righteous. At first, the Baal Shem Tov refused. But Rabbi Gershon persisted in his request until the Chassidic master finally relented.

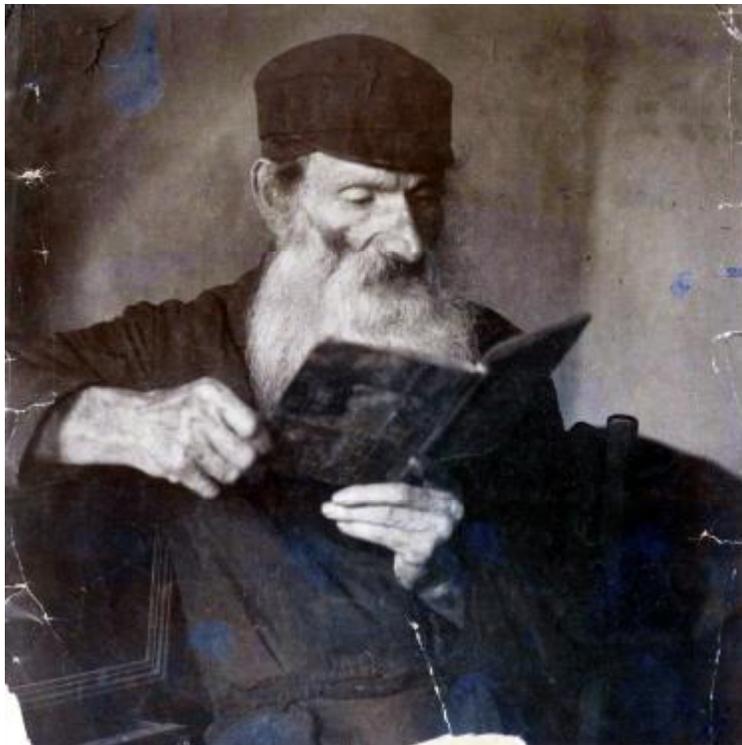
"This Friday night in *shul*, look among the crowd of beggars waiting near the door to be invited for the Shabbat meal. One of them will be a hidden *tzaddik*," said the Baal Shem Tov to Rabbi Gershon, and described the righteous pauper. "But you must promise not to let on in any way that you are aware of his true identity."

Rabbi Gershon readily identified the *tzaddik*-in-disguise and invited him to share his Shabbat meals. But though he carefully scrutinized his guest's every word and deed, he was unable to discern anything beyond the ordinary behavior of a wandering pauper. Finally, he could not resist the temptation to ask his guest to grace the table with some words of Torah.

"Me?! Speak words of Torah? A beggar the child of beggars, who has scarcely seen the inside of a *cheder*? Whatever gave you such an idea, anyway?" asked the guest, a note of suspicion in his voice.

Rabbi Gershon quickly let the matter drop.

The next day, however, at the noontime meal, Rabbi Gershon could not resist another attempt. Finally, he thought, I have one of the greatest people of the generation at my table—should I indeed learn nothing from him? Again he pressed his guest to reveal something of his well-concealed greatness. This time, the hidden *tzaddik* seemed to hesitate somewhat, as if tempted to accede to his host's request, but only for a fleeting moment; he immediately resumed his ignorant-beggar pose of the night before, protesting that the very request was ridiculous.



But at the *seudah shelishit*, the third Shabbat meal, Rabbi Gershon seemed to have finally made some headway. When he again asked his guest to enlighten him with words of Torah, the holy beggar's face was transformed. His eyes began to glow with a Divine light, and his coarse features assumed a sublime grace. He opened his mouth to speak; but before a single word emerged from his lips, he suddenly closed them, and with obvious effort, wrenched himself from his seat and bolted from the room. By the time Rabbi Gershon had collected his wits and run after him out to the street, he was gone.

The next day, when Rabbi Gershon came to see the Baal Shem Tov, he was shocked to learn that his brother-in-law had been ill all Shabbat. At the Friday night meal, the Baal Shem Tov's disciples had noticed that something was amiss; the next day the situation had worsened, and at one point, toward the close of Shabbat, it had seemed that his very life was in jeopardy. But the crisis had passed, thanks to G-d, and he was steadily regaining his strength.

When Rabbi Gershon entered his brother-in-law's room, the Chassidic master said to him: "What have you done? Because of you, I almost departed from this world.

"You see, every righteous soul has two faces-one hidden and the other revealed. The *tzaddik* who ate at your table this Shabbat is my cosmic "twin", whose greatness must remain hidden for as long as I openly serve as a teacher and guide in the service of the Almighty. But the temptation for a hidden *tzaddik* to reveal himself is very great, since every person desires to manifestly influence his surroundings. Had he done so, my soul would have had to be concealed from the world; since I am already widely known, this meant that I would have had to pass on from my present life. Luckily, he stopped himself just in time."

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Rabbi Aurbach's Old Jalopy

By Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Blau

Harav Moshe Ahron Aurbach, 7"צז , who was known as a great Baal Chesed in Toronto, was once driving with two passengers in the back of his car. As they were traveling, his passengers started to speak lashon hora .Rav Moshe Ahron repeatedly asked them to change the topic, but to no avail. His entreaties fell on deaf ears.

Rav Moshe Ahron brainstormed. After thinking for a few moments, he fearlessly stopped his car in the middle of a very busy intersection and pretended that his car had stalled! He pulled out the keys and got out to "fix" the car.

The scene was incredible – there were cars coming from every direction! People were honking and beeping, and there was traffic backed up all over. After a few minutes tinkering with the motor, Rav Aurbach closed the hood, gave it a few good bangs and got back into the car.

He jiggled the key in the ignition, and the car started. For the rest of the ride, the only topic his passengers could talk about was "Rav Aurbach's old jalopy"! (As told to me by his grandson Harav Aryeh Walden Shlita)

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of ONEG SHABBOS (London, United Kingdom.)

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky and The Lakewood Rosh Hayeshiva



Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky Rabbi Shneur Kotler

A few years after Rabbi Shneur Kotler, O”BM, succeeded his late father Reb Aharon as the Rosh Yeshiva of the Lakewood Yeshiva, the Yeshiva’s enrollment began to expand. No longer was Reb Shneur able to sit and study in the large Yeshiva all day. He was suddenly forced to raise funds, day in and day out, often leaving early in the morning and returning home past midnight.

A brief respite was the annual Agudas Israel convention of at which nearly 1,000 laymen and rabbinical leaders would gather for a long weekend to discuss the state of Torah affairs.

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, O”BM, the oldest member of the Council of Torah Sages would often highlight the keynote session on Saturday night. As the eldest of the world’s Torah sages, Reb Yaakov would find a way to sneak up to the dais, usually through a back door, to avoid having the entire crowd arise upon seeing his presence as is required by Jewish Law.

Yet this year things were different. Reb Yaakov engaged the much younger, Reb Shneur in conversation outside the large ballroom and waited until everyone took his or her seats. Then he took Reb Shneur by the hand and said, “I think it is time we took our seats.” He proudly held Reb Shneur by the arm and escorted him to the dais as the throng of people rose in awe.

Reb Shneur, stunned by Reb Yaakov's departure from his trademark humility, asked him why he did not go through the back as usual.

"Reb Shneur," he explained, "your Rebbitzin (rabbi's wife) is sitting in the auditorium. The entire year she sees you in a much-dishonored light. You run from donor to donor in order to keep the Yeshiva open, you have hardly any time to prepare your lectures, and all she sees are people knocking on your door with their problems. Yet she stands beside you faithful and unwavering. It is time that she sees that you get a little honor."

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The Rabbi's Purchase Of a Rack of Lamb



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Lashon Hara has been known to destroy lives, and there are many stories that portray this concept. The way to avoid Lashon Hara is to look upon everyone with Ayin Tova and give others the benefit of the doubt, because you never know what's behind another person's actions.

There's a story of a Rabbi from a local Yeshivah in Boro Park that was seen in the butcher shop buying a rack of lamb for \$132. The lady standing in line behind him overhears what the Rabbi is buying and texts her friend: *"My son's Rebbe is buying a rack of lamb for \$132, no wonder my son's tuition is so high!"*

That person tells her friend the same thing and says and we only eat chicken to save money!

Another person then complains through text, *"the Rabbi is spending way above his pay grade!"*

Another person said *"I know their son from camp and he is a little weird!"*

Someone else says, *"they tried to make a shiduch with his son, but B'h it didn't work out!"*

Then someone else texts that her sister who lives next door says, *"This makes sense because they just LOVE food!"*

Then someone else responds, *"I don't think this Rabbi is a good role model for our children!"*

Now they want to report the Rabbi to the principal of the school because they feel he has serious issues! Another person agrees and says, *"We'd better nip this problem now before it gets out of hand!"*

Now the wife of the Rabbi gets a call from her friend in Lakewood that she's hearing all kinds of problems about her husband's spending habits! Finally the Rabbi gets home and his wife tells him: *"People are saying bad things about you and telling everyone that you spent \$132 at the Butcher shop today?!"*

The Rabbi replied, *"Of course, Mr. Schwartz asked me to do him a favor and pick up his order of rack of lamb at the butcher for his son's Sheva Berachot tomorrow night!"*

At 2:29 this afternoon this Rabbi was a beloved Rabbi in the community and by 2:55 his reputation was destroyed. From the time it took the Rabbi to walk home from after doing a good deed, over 100 people from BORO Park to Flatbush to Monsey to Williamsburg and all the way to Lakewood NJ all had heard about the extravagant and fictitious spending habits of this Rabbi.

But None of it was true! This is a made up story but it can easily happen. IF LASHON HARAH IS LIKE A GUN AND CAN DESTROY A PERSON...LASHON HARAH ON THE INTERNET IS LIKE A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION! How many people have been harmed like this? How many times have we destroyed the Bet Hamikdash today? Next time you're about to send an email or text...**Think before you click SEND!**

Reprinted from the Parashat Tazria-Mesora 5778 email of Jack E. Rahmey with the Guidance and Teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner And the Fancy Gold Watch



When Rav Chaim Volozhiner, zt”l, was the Rosh Yeshivah, it was almost unheard of for anyone to own a watch. In those days, watches were very expensive and most people could not afford them.

Once, late one night, Rav Chaim was learning with a small group of students, and he asked if anyone knew what time it was, but no one was able to tell him the time.

Rav Chaim then said to them, “It seems that we don’t have enough Emunah, faith in Hashem. If we had perfect Emunah, we would have a watch to know what time it is— even a good gold watch.”

Rav Chaim then started teaching his students about the different aspects of Bitachon, trusting in Hashem. As the Shiur continued, the door to the room suddenly swung open and a young soldier entered and approached Rav Chaim.

He said, “Rebbe, I need your help. I come from a very wealthy home, and I have been drafted to go into the Russian army. My father had arranged for me to be exempted by a doctor, but there was a confusion and the doctor exempted someone else while I had to go report for service. Now it is too late and I have no choice but

to comply. Right now, I am the only Jew in my group. I have with me a very expensive gold watch, and I am very afraid that it will be stolen. I am too far from home to return it there, and I don't know anyone in this town. Could I please ask the Rav to hold my watch for me until I come back to claim it?"

Rav Chaim replied, "My son, I would very much like to help you, but my home is wide open to everyone, and I can't guarantee that your watch will be properly guarded."

When he heard this, the young soldier said, "In that case, Rebbe, I am giving you the watch as a gift. I would rather it belong to you than to some thief!"

Before Rav Chaim had a chance to protest, the man took his watch and placed it in Rav Chaim's hand and ran out the door. Rav Chaim immediately ran after him, but he was unable to find him outside in the dark.

Rav Chaim returned to his students and said, "As I told you. If we truly have Emunah in Hashem, He will supply us with all of our needs, and look, Hashem even sent us a nice gold watch!"

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Torah U'Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

A Goy's Kiddush Hashem in Shanghai



Rav Chatzkel Levenstein

When the members of the Mir Yeshivah fled Europe during World War II, they spent a number of years in Shanghai before they were able to relocate to Eretz Yisroel and America. Although the Jewish students and faculty were generally

treated well by the local Chinese and Japanese occupation officials, there was a group of Japanese naval officers who did not like them and who plotted against them.

They secretly arranged that the members of the Yeshivah would be taken onto a ship, and once the ship would sail out to sea, the ship would be sunk. One top-ranking Japanese man who knew about this plot felt a certain closeness to the Jews. He had respect for the boys and knew that they were men of G-d.

Therefore, he revealed the details of the operation to the authorities, and the plot was foiled. However, the group that had planned the attack discovered this Japanese man who had ruined their plans. They tracked him down and when they found him, they beat him to death.

The entire Yeshivah was very troubled by this incident. After all, this righteous gentile had saved the Yeshivah from a catastrophe. He didn't do it for his own honor or for riches. Instead, he had saved them because he felt it was the right thing to do. Why had Hashem punished him in such a way?

A group of Yeshivah boys decided to ask this question of their great Mashgiach, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, zt"l, to help them understand what had happened.

However, as they approached the door to his office, they heard him crying out in Tefilah. He said, "Ribono Shel Olam! This gentile was a wonderful man—but he was a goy. This is the first and only time he helped the Bochrin (students) of the Yeshivah, and You gave him a special gift. You gave him the chance to be Mekadeish Shem Shamayim, to sanctify Your Name and die by a Kiddush Hashem.

"But I, Chatzkel Levenstein, have served You faithfully my entire life! I have helped the Bochrin many times! I want this special gift from You so much! Why have I not merited to give my life for You?"

When the boys heard this they understood that their question had been answered. Hashem had granted that the man was given the gift to sanctify Hashem's great Name and make a tremendous Kiddush Hashem!

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