**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Yisro 5774**

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**Chassidic Story#842**

**Esrog Jam on Tu B’Shvat**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

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The sun was already overhead. Tu b’Shvat, the New Year’s Day for fruit trees in Israel, would start that night, and the residents of Jerusalem could feel the festive atmosphere permeating their famous Machane Yehuda midtown market place.

**Colorful Displays of an**

**Astonishing Variety of Fruits**

The numerous food stands were all stuffed with colorful displays of an astonishing variety of fruits, and the crowds of Jewish customers were happily buying them out of love for the fruits of the Holy Land, to be celebrated on their annual special day, and in gratitude and praise to the Creator who bountifully provides them.

In the shul of **Rabbi Shlomo**, the **Rebbe of Zevhil**, in the Beit Yisrael neighborhood of Jerusalem [behind Meah Shearim, the location of Mir Yeshiva], the chasidim were finishing the preparations for the festive meal that evening. On the crowded tables were trays and baskets filled with every species of fruit you could think of, in a spectacular variety of colors that challenged the ability of the eye to assimilate. There was even a special jam whose primary ingredient was cooked etrog, which had been prepared by the wife of one of the chasidim.

The Rebbe settled into his chair at the head of the table and deep contemplation of the fruits. He thought about the nature and symbolic significance of each of the species of fruits, and also the complicated question in Jewish law of which of the many kinds of fruits should be given the preference to recite over it the blessing before eating fruit.

Finally he chose the appropriate fruit, recited the blessing with intense concentration, and chewed a small piece. Then he had his attendants distribute most of the vast quantity of fruit among the large crowd assembled in multiple rows round the table.

**A Young Boy Walked In**

In the midst of the distribution, a young boy walked in, a cute kid of about ten years old. Most of the men in the shul recognized him, as he lived in the area and would drop in at the shul from time to time. He enjoyed spectating at the colorful events that took place there. He especially enjoyed being present when the Rebbe would host tisch a table -- from where he would distribute shirayi leftover food from his serving dish and inspire all the chasidim with song and teachings.

The Rebbe looked towards the boy, and signaled him to come closer. In excitement mixed with a bit of trepidation, the boy went over to the Rebbe’s chair. The Rebbe smiled at him and said, “Its Tu b’Shvat. Did you have any etrog jam yet?”

The boy shook his head “No.” The Rebbe dipped a spoon into the delicacy, presented it to the boy, and signaled him to say the blessing before tasting. After the boy did so, the Rebbe said to him:

**The Great Benefit of**

**Eating Etrog on Tu B’Shvat**

“Do you know that it is of great benefit to eat etrog on Tu b’Shvat? On this Rosh HaShana of Fruit Trees, all the fruits for the year to come are judged, including the etrogs that Jews will use on Sukkot for the commandment of Taking the Four Species. We have a tradition that we pray on Tu b’Shvat [during the Boraich Aleinu prayer in Shemonah Esreh] that there will be available excellent quality etrogs for the mitzvah on this holiday of Sukkot this year.”

The boy returned to his place in the crowd. By the following night Tu b’Shvat was over, and within a few days the young boy had already forgotten everything the Rebbe had said to him.

Eight months later the Jewish month of Tishrei arrived, which begins with two days of Rosh HaShana and then, on the tenth of the month, Yom Kippur. In the following four days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot, the market places and streets of Jerusalem were packed with people looking to buy the Four Species - *etrog* (citron), *lulav* ( a date palm branch), *hadasim* (3 or more myrtle twigs) and *arravot* (2 willow stems) for the *mitzvah* of joining them together and shaking them on each of the days of Sukkot [except Shabbat].

**Everyone was Hoping to Find a Good Deal**

Besides the potential customers, hoards of Jewish youth were circulating among the different stands excited to see what was happening and what would happen. Vendors were hawking their wares at the top of their voices nearly everyone was sorting through the Four Species, hoping to find a superior specimen or a good deal that their predecessors had overlooked. The most particular even pulled out magnifying classes and jeweler’s loupes to minutely examine the etrogs for blemishes, and were animatedly consulting with each other and any rabbinical authority in the vicinity.

The young boy whom the Zevhil Rebbe had befriended was also present. He found himself becoming overwhelmed with the desire to possess a superior quality, fine-looking *etrog* of his own. Every previous year he had recited the blessings over his father’s set of the Four Species. He well understood the limitations of his father’s income and how it was difficult for him to afford even the simplest *etrog* that was *kosher* for the *mitzvah*. Nevertheless, his longing became stronger and stronger, until finally he could not hold himself back, and he revealed his desire to his father.

**A Father’s Prayer for His Son’s Mission**

The father listened carefully. He was thrilled that the passion that filled his young son’s heart was to be able to fulfill a commandment in the finest possible way. Although he couldn’t possibly afford to purchase a high quality *etrog* he didn’t even possess that much cash he gave him some coins and a few small bills, and prayed that with Heaven’s help it would turn out to his son’s satisfaction. At least he would be able to have his own *kosher* *etrog*.

The boy passionately thanked his father, then ran off excitedly to the well-known *etrog* store of Reb Zalman Sonnenfeld. The shop was busy, but when there was a pause between customers, Reb Zalman turned to the young boy and pleasantly asked, “So, what can I do for you?”

“I want to buy an excellent *etrog*.”

“Really? How much money do you have?”

The boy extended his hand to allow the seller to count his meager stash. Reb Zalman kept a straight face and said patiently, “Good. Go over to that corner of the shop. There you can find a nice *etrog* for yourself. But please, make sure not to poke in any of the other *etrog* crates. Understand?”

**Begins His Pursuit of Finding an Etrog**

The boy nodded his head in affirmation and strode quickly to the corner of the store that Reb Zalman had indicated. He picked up the first *etrog* he saw, examined it, then returned it to its place and lifted up a different one. But he quickly found flaws in it so he placed that one down too. And so it went with another dozen or so samples.

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| Then, suddenly, he found himself staring with a rush of emotion at the *etrog* in his hand that he had just plucked from much deeper within the carton that had been designated to him. It seemed top notch. His heart beat faster as he rotated it slowly in his hand and scrutinized it minutely. Not a single blemish! Its color and shape also appealed to him. Even its *pitom* [pistil -- the protruding nipple at the top] was perfect. What an exemplary *etrog*.  **With Excitement He Showed**  **His Find to Reb Zalman**  He trotted to the front of the store and excitedly showed his find to Reb Zalman. The owner looked carefully at the *etrog* and began to shout at the startled boy. “Didn’t I warn you not to touch any *etrog* in the other crates? Did you really think I would sell you such a superior *etrog* for the pittance of money in your hand? Why, the price of this *etrog* is at least 200 times that!”  The boy quickly attempted to justify himself to the shopkeeper, explaining that he had discovered it in one of the boxes in the corner that had been indicated to him. He didn’t pick up a single *etrog* from any other crate.  Reb Zalman didn’t believe him.  Fortunately for the boy, some of the other shoppers had taken note of him. They enjoyed watching such a young fellow examining the *etrogs* with so much care and patience. They testified to the store owner that the boy was indeed telling the truth.  Reb Zalman felt ashamed and regretful that he had suspected the boy unfairly. He also now perceived the guiding hand of Providence in the matter. His stern face transformed with a warm smile as he said, “It appears that it was meant for you to possess a magnificent *etrog* this year. Since I recognize now that you came upon it honestly, it is yours. You deserve it. I’ll sell it to you for the sum of money in your hand.”  **Running to Show,His Find to His Father**  He wrapped and packaged the *etrog* securely and handed it to his little customer. The boy accepted it in both hands with pure joy. And to the amused delight of the sympathetic shoppers, he sprinted out of the store with his prize. He wanted to get home as fast as he could to show it to his father and relate to him all that had happened.  Only after he reached the house and calmed down somewhat did he recall suddenly and clearly what had taken place on Tu b’Shvat eight months before and the words of the *tzadik* of Zevhil: that eating etrog preserves on Tu b’Shvat and praying for a good *etrog* is a *segula* (propitious) for obtaining an excellent *etrog* for the *Mitzvah* of the Four Species on Sukkot.  He told all of this to his father too. Tears glistened in the eyes of each of them.  **Source:** Translated and adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Sichat HaShavua* #1360.  **Biographical Note**  Biographical note: **Rabbi Shlomo (Shlom'ke) Goodman of Zivhil** (?-26 Iyar--*yesod* of *yesod*--1945) was the first one of the dynasty to be based in Israel. For a long time after he came to Jerusalem, no one knew his true identity as the Rebbe to whom thousands had flocked in his native land, until a chance visitor from his hometown revealed his secret to the stunned worshipers in the *shul* he was attending. So once again he acquired thousands of followers and admirers. Famed for his remarkable deeds of kindness, he particularly concentrated on rescuing youths from missionaries and inculcating the importance of the laws of family purity to the masses, while still finding time to answer complicated questions in Jewish Law.  **Reprinted from this week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.** [**www.ascentofsafed.com**](http://www.ascentofsafed.com)[**ascent@ascentofsafed.com**](mailto:ascent@ascentofsafed.com)  **In Defense of Dovid**  **The Butcher**  **By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**  This is a story about the previous (sixth) Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Shneerson, (1880-1950) who passed away on the Tenth (Yud) of Shvat sixty four years ago as of this writing.  **A Unique Genius of Heart**  When Yosef Yitzchak was just a lad of eleven he besides showing unusual mental genius he demonstrated even a more unique genius of heart.  For example he had a free-loan fund of about sixty rubles, money given to him by his father, the holy Fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shalom Dov-Ber, for each Jewish law (Mishna) he memorized, which he freely loaned without interest to Jews in need; Especially on market day.  He got great pleasure from going once a week to the marketplace to make new loans and collect (from those who could pay) or extend (to those who couldn't) old ones. But what he especially loved was to be near the simple shopkeepers and learn from their simple and wholesome belief in the Creator.  **A Set of White Shining Teeth**  One Jew that he especially liked was Dovid the butcher. Dovid was about fifty years old and although he was almost totally illiterate he always had a blessing on his lips and a smile revealing a set of white shining teeth in contrast to his dirty-blacked face earning him the nickname "Baal HaSheniem", "Mister Teeth".  Dovid mostly made his livelihood from buying and selling livestock, especially kosher ones but in addition, he was strong and healthy and would do any sort of honest work no matter how menial or difficult, to earn a few more pennies to feed his wife and four children  One market day young Yosef Yitzchak saw Dovid walking happily through the street a basket of chickens hanging from his neck, a sheep under his arm, and a young calf on his broad shoulders.  "Hello!" shouted Dovid with a smile, unable to wave because his arms were full, "Hope to G-d I'll make a nice profit off these!"  Yosef Yitzchak waved back when suddenly from nowhere one of the local policemen, ran up to Dovid, grabbed him by the shirt and punched him full force in the face!  **Staggered by the Blow**  Poor Dovid staggered backward blood running from his nose as the policeman prepared to give him another blow.  Now this was no simple matter. The local police were the ultimate power in the area and everyone was petrified of them. In fact, if a Jew saw a policeman he would always move to the other side of the street from sheer trepidation.  But these thoughts never entered little Yosef Yitzchak's mind. Fearlessly and instinctively he ran toward the officer, and pushed him away from Dovid with all his might almost knocking him over while yelling "Drunkard! Disgusting Pig! Leave him alone!!"  The startled policeman, who was four times as big as the little boy, was totally taken by surprise. And when he regained his balance he turned his wrath on the lad. "Grab him! Take him to the jail!" He screamed to another policeman that appeared on the scene. "Look! He tore my prize medal from my jacket." (Which was a lie).  **Rushed to the Jailhouse**  His colleague grabbed the boy by the neck and rushed him through the crowd to the jailhouse where he was greeted with curses and shouting by the jailer on duty who slapped him in the face, grabbed his ear, led him down a corridor to a metal door, opened it revealing a pitch black room, pushed him in and slammed the door shut behind him.  Later Yosef Yitzchak related: "At first I was shaking with fear. What would become of me, a young boy sitting in a black dungeon in the midst of seasoned criminals?  "But then suddenly I became filled with pride. I was sitting in prison because I helped a Jew. I risked my life for the truth just like Abraham and all the Jews after him, my forefathers!  "Suddenly a muffled moaning and thrashing from a side of the room disturbed my pleasant thoughts. Fear again entered my heart. I had no idea what it was, (perhaps a dying man?) because the room was without light. I called out, but there was no answer, only more thrashing. So I sat in the dark and thought to myself that instead of being afraid, I should do something positive.  "I decided to recite the laws (Mishnaos) I had learned by heart. I thanked G-d that my father encouraged me to learn so much, and after an hour or so I finished all Seder Zeroim.  **Complete Trust in G-d**  "The Torah I learned made me stronger and now my trust was completely in G-d that everything would turn out for the best. I felt calm enough that I was able to stand and pray the afternoon prayer with great happiness.  "When I finished I sat back down to continue reciting (I knew all of the Moed section as well) and then I heard that moaning again. It was then I remembered that I had a box of matches in my pocket that I was supposed to deliver to someone in the market, but because of what happened I wasn't able to.  "I took out the box, struck a match, and in the flickering yellow light I saw what was making the noise. It was a calf tied up and gagged lying in the corner, but it wasn't the same one that Dovid was carrying when I met him in the market. It was a different one.  "Relieved that it wasn't a person, I sat back down in the dark and resumed my recitation and about an hour later the door opened. It was the jailer again but this time he had a lamp in his hand and acted differently… like another man."  **Asked for His Forgiveness**  "'He entered, took my hand and helped me to stand. 'Forgive me!' he said, almost whining, 'I didn't know that you are the nephew of Rabbi Zalman Aharon' (My father's brother who was respected by even the highest officials because of his wisdom and talents). 'And please forgive that slap I gave you. After all I didn't break any of your teeth or anything. I'm so used to hardened criminals that I'm sort of hardened myself etc.'  "I was led out of the cell to a room where Dovid, his nose and face all swollen, was standing before some officer that I supposed was the captain of the station while the policeman that punched him was accusing him of stealing the calf and two others were saying it wasn't so; they saw him buy the calf earlier.  A few minutes later I was taken to the exit, released and met outside by one of my uncle's helpers, and when I told him of what happened and of the gagged calf that shared my prison room, he returned to the station and ordered an investigation. A few minutes later the truth was revealed; the policeman had stolen that calf earlier in the day from someone else and hid it in the prison room (thinking that no one would reveal it) hoping to sell it that evening. When he saw Dovid carrying another calf he thought he could pin the one he stole on him and maybe get Dovid's calf as well.  **First Time in Prison**  It was a foolish plan. The policeman was arrested (and finally was fired and sentenced to jail). The captain apologized to Dovid and later my father gave me a reward for being so devoted to giving charity and for risking my life to help others.  That was the first time I sat in prison."  (Afterwards the Rebbe was imprisoned by the Communists six more times, the last of which was a death sentence from which he was miraculously released on the 12th of Tammuz 1927.)  *Reprinted from last week’s email from Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*  **[Misaskim Helps Travelers Cope](http://matzav.com/misaskim-helps-travelers-cope-with-erev-shabbos-storm" \o "Permanent Link to Misaskim Helps Travelers Cope with Erev Shabbos Storm)**  **[With Erev Shabbos Storm](http://matzav.com/misaskim-helps-travelers-cope-with-erev-shabbos-storm" \o "Permanent Link to Misaskim Helps Travelers Cope with Erev Shabbos Storm)**  Brooklyn - Last Friday’s snowstorm wreaked havoc on hundreds of Shomer Shabbos travelers, according to Misaskim, which stepped in to help passengers on several flights. When El Al’s flight from Tel Aviv to Newark was late in arriving by nearly 8 ½ hours, Misaskim officials made arrangements for a special detail of U.S. Immigration and Customs officials to help speed the passengers through the terminal.  The flight, originally scheduled for a pre-dawn landing of 5:00 a.m. did not land until 1:20 in the afternoon, potentially causing many of the passengers to risk not being home in time for Shabbos. Misaskim was able to arrange for a detail of 13 extra agents who were able to process 371 passengers in record time, enabling all of them to reach their destinations before Shabbos. One of the agents even walked around the baggage carousel asking if there was anyone who was a Shabbos observer and needed help.  snow1  **A Family from Brazil was**  **Stranded in Pittsburgh**  A family from Brazil suddenly found themselves stranded in Pittsburgh where a JFK-bound flight was diverted due to the storm. Flight personnel would not let the family leave the airport and only after the intervention of Misaskim were they permitted to leave. Misaskim contacted Duvy Nadoff who hosted the family for Shabbos until Sunday when they were finally able to connect to their original New York destination. The Nadoffs treated the stranded travelers like family, even giving them a tour of the city on Motzoei Shabbos.  Orthodox passengers on a JFK-bound flight from Los Angeles also endured a harrowing experience as their flight was diverted to Detroit where they were not allowed to deplane. While the plane ultimately landed at 3:20, it had to wait for a gate assignment until 8:00 p.m., well past the start of Shabbos.  **Helping Frum Passengers in Detroit**  Misaskim contacted the Far Rockaway-based Achiezer organization who was able to arrange for delivery of the food. Non Jews working for Misaskim delivered a refrigerator as well as pillows blankets. The drivers ran into some difficulties contacting some of the stranded passengers.  Misaskim officials said that the organization had long since established contingency plans for such an eventuality. Its close contacts with law enforcement officials enabled the Jews arriving from Israel to avoid chillul Shabbos. Similarly, its ability to reach out to resources in the community came in handy for some of the other stranded passengers on the snowy Friday.  *Reprinted from the January 7, 2013 edition of the Matzav.com website.*  **Love of the Land**  **“G-d of Meir, Answer Me!”**  When the great Sage Rabbi Meir went to redeem his sister-in-law from her forced confinement to a Roman house of ill-repute, the bribed guard on  duty expressed reluctance to cooperate for fear that he would be executed by the authorities who had placed her there.  “Whenever you are in danger,” Rabbi Meir assured him, “just utter the prayer ‘G-d of Meir, answer me’ and you will immediately be saved.”  To prove the potency of the prayer Rabbi Meir incited some nearby man-eating dogs to attack him. As they approached he cried out “G-d of Meir, answer me” and the dangerous dogs retreated.  The guard then released the young lady but was eventually discovered and sentenced to death by hanging. As he mounted the gallows he recalled Rabbi Meir’s promise and uttered the prayer “G-d of Meir, answer me”. In miraculous fashion he was released by his executioners. (*Mesechta Avodah*  *Zara* 18a)  Rabbi Meir’s tomb is assumed to be located in Teveria (Tiberius) and is one of the more popular places for prayer. His name lives on not only in his countless statements in the Talmud but also in the many charities which bear the name “Rabbi Meir Ba’al haNess” – Rabbi Meir the Miracle Worker.  Reprinted from last week's email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.  **Shalom Bayis or**  **Harmony in the Home**  At a recent Flatbush Hakhel Yarchei Kallah, Rabbi Maimon Elbaz, director of Torah Shows, presented a powerful PowerPoint presentation on Shalom Bayis. We highly urge all Shuls and groups to ask Rabbi Elbaz to present this Shiur to them -- he may be contacted at [nycmohel@gmail.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000po00:001InL4m00000NtA&count=1389190108&randid=1804247766&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=1804247766##). We provide below just a few highlights of the very moving presentation:  **A.** A Rav took his daughter out to eat in a restaurant the night before her Chasunah: “Why are you doing this, Totty?” she asked. He responded: “For one reason -- I want you to see how the waitress serves and smiles, is pleasant and cooperative--no matter how her day has been. Your job is much more important than hers--and I want you to always be reminded of her pleasant disposition at all times!”  **B.** One should try to keep two diaries -- one of the chassodim, the kindnesses that his spouse performs on his behalf [and perhaps on behalf of others], and a second diary which lists what his spouse really likes or loves--so that he can provide a much appreciated present or surprise from time-to-time.  **C.** Rabbi Frand teaches that before a teacher enters a classroom, he should recognize how significant his words will be by remembering the teaching of Shlomo HaMelech in Mishlei: “*HaMaves V’HaChaim B’Yad HaLashon* -- what I say will make the difference between death and life.” Rabbi Frand’s teaching can be applied before one enters his home -- even after a difficult day. By one’s words and actions, one can literally change the temperature of the home.  **D.** To paraphrase a well-known instruction: “Do not ask what your spouse can do for you…ask what you can do for your spouse!”  **E.** An important acronym that one can always apply is AAA -- Attention, Affection and Appreciation. Hakhel Note: There is a related phrase: Give, Forgive and Give-In.  **F.** Shlomo HaMelech (Mishlei 31:12) teaches: “*Gemalasu Tov V’Lo Ra’ah* -- she responds to him with good and not bad.” Even if he has not acted properly towards her..she is still *Gemalasu Tov*!  **G.** A couple married for 65 years was asked how they were able to stay together for so long. They responded: “We were born in a time that if something was broken we would fix it -- not throw it away!”  **H.** According to police reports…no husband was ever shot when doing the dishes!  **I.** The Midrash teaches that Aharon HaKohen had 80,000 boys named after him by the couples whose Shalom Bayis he had helped. If Aharon made peace for 80,000 couples, then we can certainly begin…helping ourselves and others.  **J.** A Rav was asked how long a Chosson is *Domeh L’Melech* for. He responded that it is for as long as he treats his wife as a queen!  Hakhel Note: Please review -- and apply daily in all interpersonal relationships!  *Reprinted from the January 8, 2014 Hakhel Email Community Awareness Bulletin.*  **The Power of Modern Technology for Promoting Torah and Goodness**  **By David Bibi**  Tonight is the Yahrzeit of my Rabbi and teacher Haham Asher Abittan z'sl. Its 3 A.M. and circumstances allowed me to set aside tonight to learn and then complete the newsletter. I prepared my article on Sunday and completed much of the newsletter on Monday night. So I assume I’ll be done before the sun beckons. Before I continue, can I ask you all a favor? Please . pray for a Refuah Shelemah for Yosef Ben Esther. He suffered an infection which led to complications and we pray he will be healed.  Earlier this evening my son asked me a question on Psalm 67, the one we often see in the shape of the Menorah. This is what I would study tonight. I had finished reviewing some notes when I received an email from Gutman Locks in Jerusalem. I was reminded of a conversation with Rabbi Abittan and decided to reply.  **A Dispute on the Value of**  **Torah on You Tube Videos**  Gutman writes:  When I told a ‘Charedi Rosh Hayeshiva that my YouTube videos are on a number of channels, and all together they have received well over one million views, he made a sour face and yelled, “And what good do they do?”  I tried to explain to him that the vast majority of Jews in the world today do not buy religious books, at least not Jewish religious books, so the internet is the best way to reach them. I told him that I have received letters from all over the world telling me how a video changed their lives. He scowled at me.  I just received another one. Yes, the internet is dangerous, but it is also an opportunity to help people who otherwise we would not be able to reach.  Yohanan Levi wrote:  Rabbi, I was a Jew stranded in fables and nonsense and thanks to one of your videos I came back to the Faith of my forefathers. I will forever be grateful to Hashem for you. Peace to you forever. Besides me also my mother, wife and my sister.  Gutman wrote back:  The best way to thank me is to look for someone else who is stuck where you were stuck and help him to come home, too. You can be a huge help to a lot of people if you try. Be well  I was moved and using my iphone, I wrote back, Chazak Ubaruch  Tonight is the Yahrzeit of my Rabbi and teacher Haham Asher Abittan z'sl and I fondly recall discussing the internet with him especially when I started a newsletter called Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace 19 years ago.  **Everything in the World is**  **Always Kept in Balance**  The rabbi would explain that everything in the world is always kept in balance. That which has the greatest ability to do bad, must also have the greatest ability to do good. We know the negative about the Internet, but if the negative is so great the positive and the potential must be just as great he suggested.  Rabbi Wein tells that the single greatest invention for the Jewish people was the printing press. The printing press truly allowed us to become the people of the book. And although the first item that Gutenberg printed was the Bible, few know what the second and third books were. Rabbi Wein tells us that they were books of pornography that probably outsold the Bible at the time.  **Speaking to 100,000**  **People on Tisha B’Av**  I remember when my dear friend Rabbi Paysach Krohn, was approached by another friend Michael Rothschild who founded the Chafetz Chaim Heritage Foundation. Michael asked Rabbi Krohn if he would like to speak to 100,000 people on Tisha B’Av. The rabbi wondered if Michael thought he could rent Giant stadium and fill the playing field with seats in addition to the stands. Where in New York could you put 100,000 people?  We all know that the idea of the Tisha B’Av video was born that day. Today hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world see the same video on the Ninth of Av around the world.  But technology has played a crucial role in our learning. I recall how we would go to Brooklyn for the satellite hook up to see Haham Ovadia z'sl. And with tapes, CDs, MP3s and streaming audio, many of my greatest teachers I only met years after I became their students.  **How Many Lives Have Changed?**  I remember speaking with Rabbi Yosef Kazan z'sl who founded Chabad's website. How many millions has it reached? How many lives have changed?  I probably reach 25,000 or so people each week through my newsletter and through the places that publish my thoughts on the Perasha. Compare that to the 100 people who are in Synagogue to hear a derasha on Shabbat.  There are some words that the Torah refers to using the masculine and the feminine forms. Those include fire and wind. The commonality in items the Torah refers to in both ways is the great potential for negative and positive simultaneously. Technology would be one of those items.  My rabbi z'sl would quote the Chofetz Chaim reminding us that all inventions and technologies are ultimately for our benefit.  He would imagine the Mashiah may he come bimherah beyameynu, teaching the entire world wherever anyone was as a hologram complete with holograms of books we could see and touch and turn in order to follow the daily lesson.  Let me close with a story the Rabbi would tell that Saul Kassin emailed this week.  **Rabbi Shlomo Heiman**  **And the Snow Blizzard**  Once, during a snow blizzard Rabbi Shlomo Heiman arrived to give hisShiur. His normally crowded Shiurhad only four bachurim. As was his style, he gave an animated Shiur, lecturing as if a huge crowd was present. One of those bachurimasked Reb Shlomo why he used so much effort for only four bachurim?  He replied, "Do you think I was giving the Shiur just to you? I was giving theShiur for you, for your talmidim and for all their future talmidim. Such a Shiur must be given with every ounce of strength.”  Imagine if the gedolim took advantage of these technologies. They too could speak to tens of thousands each time they taught. Imagine how that would change the world.  May Hashem bless you. May you go from strength to strength. May your views increase from a million to ten million reaching our brothers in the far corners of the earth and those next door.  *Reprinted from last week’s email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.* |

**It Once Happened**

**The Tzadeket of Satnov and the Baal Shem Tov**

The Baal Shem Tov sat under warm, fur blankets in his carriage as it sped down the dirt road toward the town of Satnov. As the carriage neared the town the strange light emanating from there became brighter and brighter. It was not the light of a fire, nor any natural phenomenon, but a spiritual light discernable to the Baal Shem Tov alone.

When the Baal Shem Tov entered the suburbs of Satnov he was greeted by a great many people who crowded around to see the famous Rebbe. After a short while he addressed himself to the crowd: "Do you know that a great tzadeket lives among you - a tzadeket - truly righteous woman, whose light I was able to perceive even from afar."

**She is Known for Her**

**Piety and Good Deeds**

"Of course, we know her. You are talking about the tzadeket, Rivka. She is known all around these parts for her piety and good deeds."

The Baal Shem Tov was very interested in hearing more about this unusual woman and even expressed his wish to meet her.

"Oh, you don't have to worry about that," replied one townsman with a smile. "She'll be here soon enough to see you. You see, Rivka will be here to ask you for a donation for the upkeep of needy families. She won't miss this opportunity."

He was right, for not an hour had passed before Rivka appeared before the Baal Shem Tov, asking for a donation. "Would the esteemed rabbi be good enough to contribute something for poor families?" she asked.

"Of course," replied the Baal Shem Tov as he handed her a small coin.

**Refuses to Accept**

**Such a Small Amount**

"Oh, I'm so sorry, but I can't accept such a small amount," she said, peering down at the copper coin. "You must have misunderstood me. You see, I am collecting for people who are poverty stricken and ill. They need expensive medicines and nourishing food. I need much more than that."

The Baal Shem Tov responded by giving her a few more small coins. She looked at him sternly and said in a strong voice, "No, this is still not enough. I can't accept anything less than 40 rubles."

The Baal Shem Tov was very impressed with Rivka, but he pretended to be angry. "What a chutzpa! Who are you to demand such a huge sum? Do you imagine that you are the treasurer of the whole town? Why, I wouldn't be surprised if you pocketed three-quarters of the money!"

Rivka was not intimidated and stood as before with her hand out in expectation of receiving the money. The Baal Shem Tov didn't disappoint her. With 40 rubles in her hand, the woman finally went on her way.

**Appeared with Another**

**Request to the Baal Shem Tov**

That night Rivka again appeared before the Baal Shem Tov with a request. But this time it was not money that she wanted. Instead, she asked for the tzadik's prayers. "Please, Rebbe, pray for the town doctor who is very ill."

"For that no-good sinner! Why the world would be a better place without the likes of him," replied the Baal Shem Tov, hoping to hear Rivka defend the doctor.

"Oh, no," countered Rivka. "First of all, no one has seen him in the act of sinning, and secondly, he is completely ignorant of the severity of his sins. I'm sure that if he understood what he was doing, he would stop immediately."

The Baal Shem Tov was satisfied with that answer, for he knew that the man's death had been demanded by the Celestial Court, and the good defense Rivka had just given was necessary to stay the decree. Not long after, the doctor recovered.

The townspeople told many stories about Rivka. Once, her two grown sons decided they should interrupt their Torah studies to come to visit their mother for a Shabbat. But Rivka's greatest pleasure was in the knowledge that her sons were devoting themselves to the study of Torah, and she didn't wish them to be interrupted from their holy pursuit.

**Asks Her Sons to Promise**

**To Do Her Request**

On the day before Shabbat she called her beloved sons to her. "I'm going to ask you to do something for me, and I want you to promise to do as I say."

They looked at her in surprise and answered, "Mother, why do you imagine we wouldn't? We will certainly do whatever you wish."

"In that case, I want you to go back to your yeshiva now, before Shabbat. I know it may sound strange, but you will do me more honor by spending your precious time in Torah study."

"But, mother, we haven't seen you for so long, and we came especially to visit."

"My sons, try to understand: Seeing you gives me great nachas, but I'm willing to wait for my reward in the World of Truth. Go back and continue your learning, so as not to waste a single precious moment. I have already prepared a carriage for you, packed with the special foods you love for the holy Shabbat. Go safely and prepare for me the eternal nachas which awaits me in the World of Truth." With that, Rivka blessed her beloved sons and sent them on their way.

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