**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Shoftim 5774**

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**The Redneck**

**By** [**Rabbi Emanuel Feldman**](http://www.aish.com/authors/48866237.html)

 It was Friday afternoon, about one hour before Shabbat, and I was anxiously driving my wife home from the Atlanta hospital where she had just undergone an anesthetized medical procedure. Her release had taken much longer than anticipated. After a short distance I realized that the car was beginning to wobble. I pulled over to the curb, jumped out to inspect things, and discovered that the left front tire had lost half of its air and would soon be entirely flat.

 There was no time to replace it with my spare, even if I knew how to do it – which, mechanically challenged as I am, I did not. But there was a gasoline station a few blocks away where I could obtain enough air to get us home before Shabbat.

 With my wife, still slightly woozy, in the back seat, I drove slowly to the gas station, the car hobbling fitfully on three and a half tires. Once in the station, I pulled up to the air pump, grateful that we could now get home quickly.

 Except there was a hand-scrawled sign on the face of the air pump: “Temporarily Out of Order.”

 I took a deep breath, said a silent little prayer, and continued my uneasy 20-minute trek toward home. At the next intersection I stopped at a traffic light alongside a garish yellow pick-up truck. The driver was a young man in his twenties, complete with a reversed baseball cap, a Confederate flag flying from his aerial, the requisite rifle stretched out along his rear window, and obviously not Jewish. He rolled down his window and called out to me, “Hey, you got a flat there, fella!”

 “I know,” I replied, and in desperation added, ”you think you could possibly help me change it? I’m taking my wife home from the hospital.”

The light turned to green. “Sorry,” he said rather gruffly, “ain’t nuthin’ I can do.” And he roared off in a cloud of foul-smelling black exhaust. His license plate showed that he was from Cherokee Country, a rural area in North Georgia.

 “Ain’t nuthin’ I can do.” And he roared off in a cloud of foul-smelling black exhaust.

 So it goes, I muttered to myself, he must have noticed my yarmulke and beard. *Probably an old fashioned, genuine redneck anti-Semite.* I was particularly annoyed by his brusqueness and the roar with which he pulled away.

 I continued driving – very carefully and gingerly. At the next corner a garish yellow pick- up truck had pulled over to the curb. Standing beside it was the young redneck. He was motioning me to park behind him.

 I stopped and he walked over to me. “I just remembered. I have one of them temporary air fillers. It gives enough air to go about ten miles. Would that get you to where you’re goin?”

 “Definitely,” I said eagerly, “let’s do it.”

 He went back to his truck and pulled out a small air compressor. ”This here baby’ll do the trick for you. I plumb forgot I owned one.” He kneeled to the ground, attached the compressor to the tire, and gradually the air whooshed in and rounded out the tire to its full, pristine glory. Deliverance! I offered to pay the cost of the compressor, but he waved me off. “Forget it. Ain’t nuthin’. Happy to do a good deed for a change.”

 And once again he jumped into his truck and roared off in a cloud of black exhaust. This time the exhaust fumes smelled like perfume.

 With G-d’s help and the help of the Confederate angel He had sent to help us, we staggered home, the tire slowly turning flat again, just in time for Shabbat. Throughout the day I could not get this young country boy out of my mind.

 Several thoughts emerged:

 1. Surface impressions are frequently wrong. I was certain that this fellow was a mean and selfish anti-Semite who cared about nothing but himself and his yellow truck. I was badly mistaken. He carried a strong streak of compassion and kindness, and a robust conscience. Thou shalt not stereotype (nor use pejoratives like “redneck”).

 2. Do not evaluate a person by what he does today. By tomorrow he could change and better himself. People are very complex; they are dynamic not static. Like a car — and a pick-up truck — people are always on the road. I wondered what had gone on in his mind in the interval between his curt ”ain’t nuthin’ I can do” to his “happy to do a good deed for a change.” What caused him to switch gears so quickly? Then I remembered the powerful words of Jeremiah 17:9: “Complex is the heart above all things… who can know it? Only I the Lord can search the heart….”

 3. One can never know what a single, isolated act of kindness can achieve. With his simple action he had eased my growing anxiety, made it possible for my still unsteady wife to come safely home, and for our entire family to celebrate the Shabbat in joy and in peace.

 My country friend taught me an extremely valuable lesson: before passing judgment on anyone, pause and think. Better still, try to not to pass any judgment on anyone. That is not our job; the world is blessed with its own Divine Judge.

*Reprinted from this week’s website of Aish.com*

**Good Shabbos Everyone**

**A Most Unusual Segula**

**For Having Children**

**By Rabbi Yechiel Spero**

 The pain and frustration of not having children had taken their toll on Dovid and Sarah Goldwasser. They had tried nearly every medical procedure, visited with almost every top specialist and had of course spent much effort and tears at the holiest sites in Eretz Yisroel. But, alas, they were married twenty-two years and still did not have children.

 The anguish would have crushed most people's spirits. But Dovid and his wife refused to give up hope and one day decided to go to Reb Chaim Kanievsky in Eretz Yisroel for a brocha - blessing. Reb Chaim was warm and caring, as well as sensitive to their needs. He asked a number of questions regarding whom they had gone to see and what procedures they had tried.

 Finally, Reb Chaim looked at them and sadly explained that sometimes Hashem in His Infinite Judgment does not grant someone a child. The couple both sat silently, contemplating the words which Reb Chaim had spoken.

 "But Rebbi, there must be something to do. There has to be—" Dovid's plea carried with it so much hurt and aching for a child.

 Reb Chaim thought for what seemed like an eternity and finally spoke. "Maybe there is a way. The Gemara (Shabbos 88b) speaks glowingly about someone who is able to endure the shame of someone embarrassing him and does not respond.

 “Perhaps—," Reb Chaim spoke with a tinge of hope in his voice, "if you receive a berachah - blessing from a person who has endured humiliation and not responded in kind, then — maybe —"

 It was all they needed. It was — if nothing else — a glimmer of hope. But the problem they now faced was how to find someone who has suffered embarrassment at the hands of another, not responded and is prepared to give them a berachah. They resolved to do whatever they had to, whatever would help them...

 Baruch Lipnick and his wife Rifka gave their new apartment a final once-over and were pleased that they had found a home in which they would be comfortable. Relatively new to the Bnei Brak area, they were pleased that their apartment search had come to an end. But as they opened the door to leave, they came face to face with a middle-aged woman standing at their door. "You're not buying this apartment, are you?"

 The couple looked at the woman and then looked at each other. Neither of them knew who this woman was and could not figure out what she could have possibly intended when she issued her warning about the apartment. "I happen to know for a fact that this apartment has had a curse placed on it."

 This announcement piqued their curiosity and alarmed them. They did want to buy the apartment but not at the expense of a shadowy curse. "How do you know that the apartment has been cursed?" They did not doubt her claim, rather they were just inquiring to get the full story. She looked at the two of them and defiantly declared, "Because I'm the one who cursed it."

 She went on to explain that she lived in a neighboring apartment and a previous owner of this apartment had built an extension which she felt intruded on her privacy, and therefore she had placed a curse on the apartment. The woman seemed to be overreacting but before they were going to buy the apartment they wanted to make sure that they were not doing anything wrong.

 They approached Rav Nissim Karelitz and explained the situation to him. Rav Nissim smiled and totally dismissed the woman's ludicrous claim, and justified his decision by explaining that the previous apartment owners had been given a permit by beis din - Rabbinical Court to proceed with their extension; hence the woman's claim was completely unfounded and contrary to a ruling of beis din.

 In fact, Rav Nissim concluded, he had been a member of that beis din. Based on their conversation with Rav Nissim, Baruch and his wife were relieved and decided to go ahead with the purchase of the apartment. Within a month they moved in and before long were completely settled. Although they were happy in their new living quarters, they still hadn't made many friends in the area. And so, when they were invited to a local Bar Mitzvah, Baruch was happy that his wife would be able to meet some of the other women in the neighborhood.

 But unfortunately his happiness at the prospect of his wife meeting new women from the neighborhood quickly turned into a nightmare. In the middle of the Bar Mitzvah meal, the woman who had cursed their apartment burst into the room. She looked around and when her eyes finally locked onto Mrs. Lipnick's she let loose with a tirade directed at Mrs. Lipnick and her husband, claiming that they were "liars and cheaters, insensitive and uncaring." The entire barrage lasted for only about 2 minutes, but it felt like an eternity.

 Mrs. Lipnick was mortified and was about to react to what had happened when someone tapped her urgently on her shoulder, "Please, I beg you, don't respond."

 Mrs. Lipnick turned toward the woman who had tapped her and realized that she had never seen her before. The woman introduced herself quickly as Mrs. Goldwasser and again begged Mrs. Lipnick not to respond. So Mrs. Lipnick sat there quietly and suffered the terrible shame and indignity.

 The crazed woman finally left and Mrs. Lipnick sat in her chair, feeling humiliated. "Please allow me to explain..." Mrs. Goldwasser sat down next to Mrs. Lipnick and told her about the entire meeting with Reb Chaim Kanievsky. "I've waited four and a half years to meet someone like you and I beg you to give me a berachah for a child." Mrs. Goldwasser's eyes were filled with tears and so were Mrs. Lipnick's.

 And with heartfelt emotion, Mrs. Lipnick blessed her newfound friend that her years of suffering should end. And miraculously, twenty-six and a half years after they were married Dovid and Sarah Goldwasser cried tears of joy as they held their newborn baby boy in their arms. (Excerpted from “Touched by a Story,” by Rabbi Yechiel Spero p. 235)

Reprinted from last week’s email of Good Shabbos Everyone.

**L’Maaseh…A Tale to Remember**

**A Nighttime L’Chaim**

**To the Ribono Shel Olam**

*“Hashem will remove from you every illness” (Devorim 7:15)*

 HaRav HaKadosh Rebbe Fishel of Satrikov, zy”a, was in the habit of taking a little whiskey every night before going to sleep. He would recite a brachah, taste a little, and say: “L’Chaim, Ribono Shel Olam! To life, Master of the Universe! Source of life! Good night to You, Master of the Universe!”

 One time he explained his intentions with this. He intended with this that it should be a merit that all the sick of Israel should be healed speedily, and this was his kavanah.

 He reasoned that most of the time an ill person feels worse at night, as his illness overpowers him. Also, the sick are in great pain. And since it states (Yeshaya 63:9): ‘In all their troubles, He was troubled’, therefore, if the sick would have a good night then surely this will be pleasant and satisfying for Hashem Yisbarach! (Sipurei Tzadikkim)

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights, Issue #208.*

**101 and Going Strong; Hy Goldman Still on The Job at Capitol Lighting in East Hanover**

By James Lent

 EAST HANOVER TWP. – Talk about company loyalty.

 Statistics show most people today change jobs a many as nine or 10 times during the course of their lifetimes before retiring.

 Hy Goldman is decidedly not of that camp. He has been working for the same company, Capitol Lighting, for the past 73 years, since June 1, 1941 when he was 28, years old, to be exact. And even though the World War II Army veteran lives in the Lester Senior Housing Community on Route 10 in Whippany, he has no plans on retiring anytime soon despite the fact he just celebrated his 101st birthday last Sunday.

 The family owned Capitol Lighting held a birthday bash for Goldman at its Route 10 East Hanover store on Monday complete with cake and ice cream.



Hy Goldman at work at Capitol Lighting

 Goldman is an artist of sorts. For the past 12 years he has been working at the Route 10 store where he has his own workshop he calls his “studio” at the rear of the second-floor clearance section. Goldman takes broken and discarded electrical lighting fixtures and refurbishes them, adding wiring to many or finding blades for ceiling fans or adding new glass globes to transform old lighting fixtures into something brand new to sell in the clearance section.

 So, why does he do it, why is he still working when just about everybody else lucky enough reach age 101 would have retired decades earlier?

 “It’s the challenge,” he said. “It keeps me mentally going and my body still moving.”

 Capitol Lighting wasn’t Goldman’s first job. He first worked on the sales floor store at the original Fortunoff store in Brooklyn.

 He was hired at the original Capital Lighting Store on Springfield Avenue in Newark in 1941 by Ethel Lebersfeld, who co-founded Capitol Lighting in 1924 along with her husband Max Lebersfeld, an electrical contractor and immigrant from Austria-Hungary. The family-owned business is now under the direction of a fourth generation of Lebersfelds.

 Goldman was working for Capital when he was drafted into the Army in 1943, two years after being hired. “I came out (of the Army) in 1946 and rejoined Capitol,” he said.

 “In those days we did everything,” Goldman said. “There was no technology. We swept the floors and sold merchandise and set up displays. We unloaded trucks. We knew what inventory we had in our store by memory. Today you look it up on a computer.”

 Ethel Lebersfeld was the grandmother of current Capitol Lighting Co-Chairmen Max and Herman Lebersfeld.

 “I can remember the 1950s coming in when I was 10 and 11 and playing with the cash registers,” said Max Lebersfeld, who was on hand at the East Hanover store Monday for the birthday celebration. “Hy was a fixture then.”

 Goldman saw the growth of the company from the one store to its current status of four New Jersey stores and two in Florida.

 “We also do 20 percent of our business online,” Lebersfeld said (at [www.1800lighting.com](http://www.1800lighting.com)).

 Meanwhile, Hy Goldman, still comes to work four day a week, and still drives his car as he does so.

 In fact, he still shovels out his car when it’s snowbound.

 “After one of the big snowstorms last winter, Hy went out and started shoveling himself out,” Lebersfeld said. “I’m sure someone came along and helped him but that’s the kind of person he is. He’s unstoppable.”

 “What am I going to do, sit around and grow old?” Goldman wanted to know.

*Reprinted from the August 18, 2014 edition of the Hanover (NJ) Eagle News.*

**A Jewish Matchmaker Whose Hand Led Hundreds Down the Aisle**

**By Mark Oppenheimer**

 PITTSBURGH — When I walked into Tova Weinberg’s large house here in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh, she looked me up and down and asked, “Are you Jewish?” I told her I was. “Are you married?” Yes, I said.

 That was, apparently, the wrong answer. She wrinkled her nose and said, in a disappointed tone, “Oh, O.K. Never mind.”

 I had just been sized up, then dismissed, as a potential match. Ms. Weinberg, 60, is one of the country’s top Jewish matchmakers. A dentist by training, she long ago gave up that career for her full-time calling as a shadchen, to use the Hebrew and Yiddish word for one who makes shidduchs, or matches.

 At any given time, Ms. Weinberg has the names of “hundreds, maybe thousands” of single Jews bouncing around in her head, and over the years she has introduced “about 250” couples who went on to get married. That is not including those who met online at [SawYouAtSinai.com](http://sawyouatsinai.com), the matchmaking website she helped found.

 Raised in Detroit, Ms. Weinberg made her first match as a young woman in New York, where her mother had suggested that she move to find a mate. In 1976, as Ms. Weinberg recalled, an older friend, dedicated to matchmaking, asked Ms. Weinberg to help organize a singles party.

 “At the party,” Ms. Weinberg said, “I meet this girl named Debbie, and I said, ‘You don’t know me, but I have this feeling you’d be perfect for my friend Mark Goldenberg.’ ” The woman was reluctant to meet a stranger. “There were so many hijackings, there was David Berkowitz,” the Son of Sam killer. “She said, ‘How do I know you’re not a mass murderer?’ I got on my hands and knees and said, ‘Do me a favor and have dinner with him.’”

 The day after the couple’s first date, Ms. Weinberg heard from the man. “He called me and said, ‘I’m going to marry her.’ And they just married off their last child.”

 Ms. Weinberg did find a husband for herself in New York, too. They moved to Pittsburgh for his work as a doctor, and she practiced dentistry for a time, but continued to make matches on the side. It became more than a hobby.

 “There was so much intermarriage in Pittsburgh, I felt I had to do something,” she said. “I started talking to all these women’s organizations. I said: ‘Listen, I have men! My husband knows all these residents and interns. Give me your daughters, I have the boys!’ ”

 Ms. Weinberg, who has five children and 15 grandchildren, is an observant Jew of the Modern Orthodox persuasion. She does not work or use electricity on the Sabbath, but nor does she cover her hair, as more strictly observant women do. There are dozens of other Jewish matchmakers, but most primarily serve Orthodox Jews, and many charge for their services. Ms. Weinberg is unusual for working with all branches of Judaism, and for refusing money.

 “Baruch Hashem” — blessed is G-d’s name — “my husband makes a lot of money, so I can do this for free,” Ms. Weinberg said. A conversation with her involves a lot of listening; a lot of Baruch Hashems; and talk of finding one’s bashert, one’s destiny, or soul mate.

 In 2004, investors approached her and asked her to help them start SawYouAtSinai.com, which uses matchmakers to pair members. When I visited Ms. Weinberg last week, the website had 18,344 members and 355 matchmakers, including Ms. Weinberg. On SawYouAtSinai.com, members can see only those profiles of other members suggested by the site’s matchmakers.

 One of her primary tasks, on the website and for her private clientele, is to help singles be less picky, Ms. Weinberg said.

 One frequent mistake she sees is “looking for something they think their parents want them to have,” she said. “And thinking they can’t compromise, like on religion: ‘I have to have somebody who is super religious and learns all day long,’ or, ‘I have to have somebody who eats shellfish out, but is Jewish.’ ”

 Women can be superficial — “A lot of women don’t like bald men,” Ms. Weinberg said — but men are worse. “I’ll have a singles party, they’ll come into the room, look around, say, ‘Bye!’ They don’t even get to know anybody. They don’t look at the neshama,” the soul, she said.

 Some of the men have mommy issues, too.

 “I have this one man,” Ms. Weinberg said, “whose mother used to be a ballerina, so he is looking for a woman with long legs, no chest. And he’s a rabbi!”

 Ms. Weinberg will work with any client as long as he or she is Jewish by the traditional standard of maternal descent: “I work with everyone whose mother is Jewish. The father could be the pope.” And she will work with clients who are gay, as long as they are looking for a straight marriage.

 Ms. Weinberg will take extraordinary measures to help put a man and woman together for life. She told one of her sons she would give him $10,000 if he found a husband for his sister, and he did. She will also take certain liberties in the service of love.

 “Something you should know about Tova is she creatively alters the truth under certain circumstances,” said [Beverly Siegel](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/17/us/orthodox-jews-look-to-prenuptial-contracts-to-address-divorce-refusals.html), a documentary filmmaker from Chicago. Widowed after a long first marriage, Ms. Siegel met her second husband through Ms. Weinberg.

 “She told Howard some things about me that were not exactly true,” Ms. Siegel said. “She told him that I was 55, but I was 59. She told him I was willing to relocate. Howard was living in New York at the time. My feeling was when you say you are willing to relocate, it’s a matter of how much, it’s a negotiation. But she just said, ‘She’s willing to relocate.’ Period.”

 Ms. Weinberg also told Ms. Siegel that her prospective date, Howard Rieger, was “the most important Jew in North America.” Mr. Rieger was the president of United Jewish Communities, a national philanthropy, and so was one very important Jew. But Ms. Siegel now finds that description a bit dubious.

 “I think it’s safe to say he wasn’t the most important Jew in North America,” Ms. Siegel said of her second husband. But they were married in September 2008, five months after they started emailing, four months after their first date.

 “Tova is an amazingly talented woman,” Ms. Siegel said. “She is obsessed in a wonderful way.”

*Excerpted from the August 16, 2014 edition of The New York Times.*

**Story#873**

**The Present of Iron**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

When the telephone rang in his house, R. Shlomo ran to answer it. He was expecting an important business call. Instead, it turned out to be the surprise of his life: the voice emerging from the receiver was that of his Rebbe, Rabbi Eliezer-Zusya Portugal of Skulen. He snapped to attention and listened with awe and respect to his beloved rebbe's words.

R. Shlomo was a wealthy businessman who lived in Mexico City. But he did not let his business dominate his life or his wealth and success go to his head. His humility was such that he lived a simple life and was satisfied with very little, and in this spirit conducted his household. His children received a pure Torah education imbued with Chasidic values.

As a loyal Skulener chasid he traveled periodically to New York to visit his Rebbe, who had moved there from Rumania after the Holocaust. But he never expected to receive a phone call initiated by the Rebbe himself. The Rebbe asked him how he was and then went on to inquire about the members of his family He expressed particular interest in the education of the children. R. Shlomo expressed gratitude for all that the Creator had granted him in health and wealth, and especially the *nachas*, the Jewish satisfaction, that he had from the studies and behavior of his children.

"And what of your son Moisheleh," the Rebbe continued to enquire. "Are you making sure that he is learning Torah properly?

Moshe was a very smart post-*bar mitzvah* boy, but he was also exceptionally energetic and he could be quite mischievous. The Rebbe knew this from when his father had brought his son along with him on his previous visit to the Rebbe in New York.

"Certainly," replied R. Shlomo proudly. "He is on schedule to complete Tractate Sukkot in about two weeks. He learns very well, praise G-d."

"So, have you given him a nice prize for his study achievements?" the Rebbe pressed on. R. Shlomo admitted that he hadn't.

"If so, I advise that you promise the boy that if he completes Gemara Sukkot and does well when he is tested on it, you will buy him a special present as a reward for his excellent achievement. Tell him that he can choose the present.

"This is important for the good of the child, and for your benefit as well. But remember, you must let him select the present," concluded the Rebbe.

R. Shlomo felt both amazed and honored by the Rebbe's concern for his family in such minute detail. When he told his son that he would get a special present that he himself could choose for completing the tractate, Moisheleh jumped for joy. He studied enthusiastically day and night until he knew all the material very well. When his teacher tested him, he was impressed with how well Moshe did.

Now it was the turn of the father to fulfill his commitment. He asked his son what he chose for his reward. Moisheleh's answer astonished him. It made no sense whatsoever. He requested a long thick iron chain, accompanied by a big lock so that he could open and close the chain at will. His father was not pleased at all by this choice, but he well remembered the Rebbe's emphatic insistence that the boy be the one to pick his own reward, so he accepted the decision and made the purchase.

A few days later, in the afternoon shortly before the scheduled hour of the afternoon Mincha prayer, Moshe was playing in the large front yard of their house. His father had returned just before, and had gone to his room for a brief rest before heading for the synagogue for the Afternoon and Evening prayers, and his regular Torah study session in between.

What he didn't know was at that moment there were two criminals waiting in their car with darkened windows that was parked near the house. For several days already they had been keeping watch on the house and scouting the area. They were well acquainted with R. Shlomo's daily schedule. Their intention was to lie in wait till he exited the house to go to *shul* for Mincha, and then they would snatch him and hold him for ransom.

This was a pattern that was repeating itself all too often in those years in Mexico. Abductions of the wealthy were a commonplace occurrence, and the police had proved themselves to be unable to prevent them. Sometimes the ransom would be paid and the victim released, but sometimes the victim was never seen alive again.

This time the snatch began smoothly for the kidnappers, according to their plan. R. Shlomo emerged from the house at precisely the expected minute and locked the door behind him. At that moment the bandits snuck up behind him. One pinned his arms and the other stuffed a rag in his mouth so that he couldn't scream for help or attract attention. Then they knocked him to the ground and kicked and beat him almost to unconsciousness, and quickly dragged him over to their waiting car.

But that is when the scenario fell apart for them, and in a way they could not possibly have anticipated, or even imagined. They rubbed their eyes in disbelief. Their getaway car was securely chained by a long heavy iron chain and giant lock to the electric pole that it was parked next to! In shock, they momentarily relaxed their grip on their still groggy captive, who nevertheless was now sufficiently alert to promptly flee as speedily as he could, while flinging the rag from his mouth and screaming for help.

A crowd began to gather and the police were summoned. The bandits realized they were in a dangerously vulnerable situation. The packed crowd would hinder any attempt to escape on foot. In desperation they jumped into their car. The driver revved the engine, put the gear in Drive, and pressed the accelerator to the floor. The engine roared and whined but was unable to pull away from the curb. Finally the chain snapped and detached from the electric pole. The car zoomed away at its maximum speed, with the long chain still dangling from it.

The police on the scene quickly radioed a bulletin about the speeding car with a long chain dragging after it. Armed with this unique description, it did not take long until the fleeing car was trapped between a pair of police vehicles, and the two kidnappers were arrested and imprisoned securely behind bars.

After receiving first-aid, R. Shlomo spent the next several hours at the police station, answering questions and recording testimony. When he finally reached home late in the evening, he went directly to his son's room and asked him how did it happen that he chained the car to the electric pole. Moshe smirked and confessed that he was being naughty, playing a trick. That a car was parked next to their house adjacent to an electric pole was too strong a temptation to exist-he just had to try to lock it to the pole with his new strong cable chain.

The father grasped his son around the shoulders and, after giving him a warm hug, emotionally showered his cheek with kisses. "Your mischievous behavior saved my life," he kept repeating.

Soon thereafter R. Shlomo decided to travel to his Rebbe in Brooklyn. He told the Skulener the whole story of what had happened and profusely thanked him for his inspired advice.

The Rebbe rejoiced when he heard about the miraculous rescue, and remarked smilingly that since the bandits had broken Moshe's new chain and lock, it would be appropriate for his father to buy him a replacement present.

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Source: Translated by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Sichat HaShavua* #1395. (First posted on AscentofSafed.com.)

Biographical note: Rebbe Eliezer-Zusya Portugal [1 Cheshvan, 1898 - 29 Av 1982], *the Skulener Rebbe*, immigrated to the USA in 1960, after imprisonment in Rumania and international efforts to secure his release. He was a prominent follower of the Shtefaneshter Rebbe and the author of Noam Eliezer and Kedushas Eliezer, but is best known for his superhuman efforts to rescue Jewish orphans and refugees in Eastern Europe before, during and after WWII and his continuing support of them, and his Chessed L'Avraham network of schools for children that continue until today. Those who merited to be in his presence were astonished by the length of his prayers and the beauty and intensity of the tunes that he composed, many of which have become internationally famous today.

Editor's note: In the mid-seventies I had the merit and great pleasure to be a sole Shabbat Evening Meal guest of the Skulener Rebbe and his Rebbetzin. Forty years later, I still tremble when I recall the intensity, focus and slow pace with which he recited Kiddush.

Connection: Seasonal-the 32 *yahrzeit* of the Skulener Rebbe.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed* [*www.ascentofsafed.com*](http://www.ascentofsafed.com)*ascent@ascentofsafed.com*