**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas pinchas 5776**

Volume 7, Issue 48 24 Tammuz 5776/ July 30, 2016

**Printed L’illuy nishmas Nechama bas R’ Noach, a”h**

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**Stuck South of Tijuana**

**For Tisha B’Av**

**By Rabbi Yirmiyahu Ullman**

 Someone told me that he and some friends went down to vacation in Mexico shortly before Tisha b’Av, something they should not have done at that time. On the eve of Tisha b’Av they decided that they should get back to San Diego in order to properly observe the commemoration of the destruction of the First and Second Temples.

 When they approached the border they found out that no crossing would be allowed for hours, which meant no properly observed Tisha b’Av night for them. With no shul or appropriate prayer books, they checked into some hotel south of Tijuana intending to use the hotel WiFi to access the liturgy and read Eicha (Lamentations) from their phones in their room.

 However, the Wi-Fi didn’t work in their rooms. But the Wi-Fi worked properly in the hotel’s lobby. So rather than give up, they decided to read Eicha in this “unorthodox” fashion while sitting on the floor in the lobby of this Mexican hotel despite the spectacle it would make among the non-Jews.

 As they prayed, a young woman was watching them from the corner of the lobby where she sat. She was very moved by what she had seen, and when they had finished she asked them what they had been reading.

 They somewhat awkwardly explained to her about G-d, the Jewish People, the Temple, exile and the hope for Redemption. As the group was preparing to leave the hotel, the young woman suddenly appeared, wearing a Jewish Star of David on her neck!

 She explained that after she left the group and told her mother everything that happened, her mother revealed to her for the first time in her life that they are descended from Jews, and that this Jewish Star was a relic from her maternal grandmother!

 Through their fault in being in the “wrong” place for the “wrong” reasons, G-d nevertheless compensated for their misdeed by using them as unwitting agents for the revelation of, and hopefully for the redemption of, this lost Jewish spark rekindled south of Tijuana!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Chukas 5776 email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.*

**Yes, We Can Make a Difference in a Seemingly Immoral World**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

 The Gemara says that there was once a great Rabbi known as Shemuel Hakatan. He was so great that he was worthy that Hashem’s shechinah (Hashem’s presence) should rest upon him, but his generation was not worthy to be able to see this. So we see that the generation we live in can cap our spiritual growth. What occurred a year ago with the Supreme Court and the follow up of many [immoral] marriages has the power to limit our own growth.

 What do we do about this? Do we just groan about it? Rabbi Avraham Ausband, shelitah, once told this true story. A woman was hired by a company in Riverdale. She dressed very modestly but she appeared somewhat different.

 They asked her about her past, and she said she is a religious Jewish convert. She used to live in Bayonne, NJ, and she used to dress inappropriately. Very inappropriately.

 Many times she would see the yeshivah students from the Yeshivah of Bayonne walking the streets. She was curious who they were, so she went over to them to ask directions (in her usual immodest garb). They were very courteous and answered her, but they always looked down. She was amazed and looked into it, and she converted. This woman who lived on a low moral standard was inspired

when she was confronted by modesty and purity in the same way that Bilam was.

 Rav Shach, zt”l, once said that the prayer of Alenu that we say at the end of our prayers says: “All the evil-doers of the Earth will recognize and knowâ that every knee will bow to you and that we will take oaths by Your Name.” This means that in the last generation before Mashiah, all the evil-doers will be turned over. It’s our job to turn them over to good. How can we? Our own actions inspire them to change. In that way, this generation we live in will not cap our growth. This generation of ours is both a challenge and an opportunity.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Balak 5776 email of the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.*

**Named for a Prophet**

 Located about eight kilometers west of Tsefat is the Moshav Kerem ben Zimra, which the Jewish community built on the site of the village, evacuated by the Arabs during the War of Independence.

 The name of the moshav stems from the tradition that buried in that area is the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Yossi ben Zimra. One of the statements for which this Sage is famous goes like this: “Just as a woman is not ashamed to ask her husband for the needs of her family, so too are the Prophets not ashamed to ask G-d for the needs of His people.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Chukas 5776 email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.*

**Rav Leizer Yudel Finkel**

**Of the Mirrer Yeshiva**

 The period between the two World Wars saw the Mirrer Yeshiva flourish and grow to over 500 students. They came to Mir from other yeshivos in Lithuania and Poland, such as Baranovitch and Kletzk.  They came from distant lands -- from America, Germany, South Africa, Switzerland, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, England, Romania, Hungary, Italy, Finland and Australia.

 Together with Rav Yerucham Levovitz, the Mirrer Mashgiach, Rav Leizer Yudel made the yeshivah thrive spiritually.  However, financially the situation took a drastic turn for the worse.  Aside from the enormous burden of financing the new yeshivah building, the declining world economic situation reduced support for the yeshivah.

 At one juncture, there were absolutely no funds with which to feed the students or pay the Rebbeim.  They literally hungered for bread.  Rav Leizer Yudel insisted that his fur coat, which he received at the time of his marriage, be sold, and the proceeds be used to purchase food for the students and the Rebbeim’s families.

 The yeshivah administrators refused, arguing that without the coat, Rav Leizer Yudel would catch cold and become ill during the severe Polish winter.  Rav Leizer Yudel told them:  “When my students hunger for bread, I feel cold even while wearing my fur coat.  If my students will be satiated with sufficient food, I will feel warm even without my coat.”

 Rav Leizer Yudel maintained an open-door policy in his home for all yeshivah students to come and share Torah thoughts with him.  Whether they came with a *chiddush* in Seder Zeraim, a thought cited in Seder Taharos, or a difficulty they found in Seder Nezikin, Rav Leizer Yudel could converse fluently with all of them, as if he had just been deeply involved in learning that particular subject matter.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Balak 5776 email of The Weekly Vort.*

**Emunas Chachomim #6**

**The Rebbe’s Advice**

**To Become a Mohel**

 A young chassid due to be drafted into the Russian army went to the Sfas Emes for a blessing. The Sfas Emes advised the chassid to become a mohel. Surprised about the piece of advice, the chassid asked his father about it.

 Said his father, “The Rebbe told your two brothers, who are full-time Torah scholars, that ‘whoever takes upon himself the yoke of Torah, the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly cares are removed from him.’ You are not a fulltime scholar and the Rebbe advised you differently. No doubt the Rebbe knows what he is saying. You go ahead and do as he advises.”

 The young chassid learned how to become a mohel. He was later drafted and dispatched to a remote region deep in Russia. He always carried his circumcision instruments with him. At one of the stations on the way, his unit was visited by the regimental doctor who wanted to know whether there was any Jewish soldier among them. This young chassid, the only Jew in the unit, was summoned.

 The doctor took him to his home where he divulged a secret. His wife was Jewish and every night since she had given birth to her son, her father had appeared to her in dreams insisting that she have her infant circumcised. The doctor said that he had already been searching a long time for a Jew to circumcise the child. He asked the chassid to keep the matter strictly confidential, and offered to pay whatever the cost if this chassid could arrange for someone to perform the circumcision.

 The chassid said, “I happen to be a mohel, who circumcises children. And I will keep your secret too. But instead of taking any payment, I would like you to keep my secret and to help me secure a discharge from army service. I am an observant Jew, and here I simply cannot fulfill the commandments of my faith. I can see that I have been sent here by the hand of Heaven so that I can help you and you can help me.”

 The chassid performed the circumcision, the officer kept his promise, and the chassid returned to Ger where he humbly and thankfully recounted his story to the holy Sfas Emes. (Rebbes of Ger)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Chukas 5776 email of The Weekly Vort.*

**Just Trust and You Will See**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**

 People often say to me, "I have Emunah; I know that everything that happens is for the best. But, what about what I am going through now? Is that also for the best?" The people are good people; they are sincere. They do have Emunah. But when the time comes to apply it to their own lives, it is not so easy to feel that goodness.

 Deep down, they really do believe that it is for the best. They just need some reassurance sometimes. Everything that happens is orchestrated by Hashem for our benefit. We don't always see that good, but we know it's true. Many times, it is the tough situations themselves that are the springboards to bring us to the places that we need to be.

 Rabbi Reuven Elbaz told a story about one of his oldest students in the Yeshiva who was a Baal Teshuva, and he grew leaps and bounds in Torah and Yirat Shamayim. He was ready to start dating and was set up with a great girl from a respected family. Everything was going great. A few days before they were going to get engaged, the girl broke it off.

 The young man was devastated. He thought that he was going start a family and a בית נאמן- a holy Jewish home with the perfect girl, and now everything was shattered. He went to Rabbi Elbaz who explained to him, "It is all מן השמים- straight from Heaven, don't worry, Hashem will give you the real girl that He has intended for you."

 But it was very hard for the young man to accept. He told the Rabbi, "I just want to cry. But I want to channel my tears toward prayer to Hashem, so I am going to go to the Kotel."

 On his way to the bus stop, a car pulled over and asked him if he knew how to get to the Kotel. It was a religious man, traveling with some of his family members, so the young man said, "Yes, actually, I am going to the Kotel. If you want, I could come with you and show you how to get there."

 He got into the car and they started talking Torah. They spoke Torah the entire way. The driver was very impressed by the things that this young man was saying, and he seemed to have beautiful Midot. In the backseat of the car was the driver's wife and his single sister.

 When they arrived at the Kotel, the wife got out of the car and asked the young man if he was dating. She told him that she has a great girl, her sister in law, who was actually in the car with them. He agreed to go out, and that night they had their first meeting. Eventually, he married that girl. He told Rabbi Elbaz, "Baruch Hashem that this is the one I am marrying, and not the first girl. Now I see how she is much better for me in every way: Yirat Shamayim, Midot. I fit in perfectly with her family and they are even helping us financially."

 When he was crying about that broken Shiduch, Hashem was saying, "Your real Shiduch is on the way to the Kotel now. I have to get you there. This breakup is best for you, trust Me."

 A Rabbi spoke at his daughter's Sheva Berachot last week and said over that a year ago his daughter came back from studying for a year in Seminary. She was looking to get a teaching job. She was very qualified. She went for her first interview to give a model lesson in a school about forty-five minutes from her house. They absolutely loved her. They told her on the spot, "You got the job." This was at the end of the school year. They told her, that every summer there is usually one teacher who has to leave, you will take the place of that teacher. They called her back at the beginning of August, and they told her that the second grade Morah is leaving, so you are hired for second grade. The girl started to prepare and was excited to start her new position.

 Less than a week before the school year started, they called her back and said, "Unfortunately for you, the second grade teacher was only leaving on condition that her other job worked out, but it didn't, so she's back. We're sorry, but we don't have any positions available now."

 The girl was now stuck with just a few days left until school and no job. Her initial thoughts were, "How could they do this to me? I could have found a job in ten other schools!" She then calmed herself down and realized that it was all from Hashem.

 She ended up getting a secretary job in a business very close to her house. Though it wasn't what she wanted to do, she took what she could get. The other secretary who worked there was so impressed with her that she suggested her for her brother. Recently, she married that boy and became the sister-in-law of the other secretary.

 Hashem knew exactly what He was doing the whole time. He prevented the girl from getting a teaching job in a school so that she could find her Shiduch. Hashem always has our best interest in mind. The more we trust Him, the happier we'll be.

*Reprinted from the July 13, 2016 email of Daily Emunah.*

**L’Maaseh A Tale to Remember**

**How Tznius (Modesty)**

**Can Save One’s Life.**

 Rabbi Scheinbaum writes that dressing and acting appropriately are prerequisites for Torah-oriented behavior, and the way one dresses represents their attitude with regard to Hashem. To dress in an immodest manner is to put Hashem to shame and cause Him to turn away.

 In Sefer Nitzotzos, Rav Yitzchak Hershkowitz relates an inspiring story, which underscores the importance of Tznius in the life of a Jew. A Kollel fellow in Yerushalayim received a letter from a young woman containing a note of deep gratitude for “what he had done for her.” “In fact,” she wrote, “you saved my life.” Now his curiosity was piqued. He could not remember an incident in which he had saved anyone’s life - let alone the life of this woman. Not allowing this letter of gratitude to go unanswered, he checked the return address, and he was able to locate and contact the sender of the letter.

 The story he heard was mind-boggling. Apparently, a few weeks earlier, he had gone to the bank where he usually conducts business. Waiting in line, he noticed that the female teller was dressed inappropriately. Under normal circumstances, he would have kept his mouth shut or moved over to a different teller, but this time, for some reason, he was bothered. After all, since it was a public place that catered to many observant Jews, he felt that the young woman should have shown a little more respect.

 Furthermore, she was herself “somewhat” observant. True, it was a warm summer day, but what is wrong is wrong. “Excuse me, ma’am,” he said courteously and with complete sincerity. “Do you think it is appropriate for you to serve the customers of this bank wearing the outfit that you have on?”

 Before she could reply, he added, “Tznius is very important, and it impacts the environment around you. More than that, however, what about yourself? What about your own self-respect? Is this what you think of yourself?”

 Powerful words, to which the young lady countered, “Sir, if you have a problem with my outfit, you can always take your business to the next teller.” End of story? No!

 A few weeks later, the young lady was a guest at the wedding of a close friend. It was a warm evening, and the dancing was quite spirited. She began to perspire and felt over-heated. She decided that, if she were to continue dancing, she would remove her new, stylish jacket that she was wearing over her dress.

 As she was about to remove it, she somehow reminded herself of the comment the Kollel fellow had said to her earlier in the bank: “It is not only about others; it is also about you.”

 She then decided that this time she would have a little more self-respect, and rather than remove the jacket, she would go outside and cool off in the evening air. In her heart, she felt that perhaps the man was right. She had no business lowering her self-esteem by dressing in an immodest fashion.

 As she stood outside enjoying the cool air and reflecting over her conversation with the man, she suddenly heard the sirens of many ambulances. She turned around and looked at the wedding hall, and she saw that the floor on which she had just been dancing on, was gone! The entire floor had collapsed! Horrified, she realized that she could have still been dancing inside at the time of the collapse, but she had gone outside to cool off — rather than remove her jacket! Tznius had saved her life!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Chukas 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Story #973**

**Heavenly Protection from**

**A Book and a Rabbi**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0001Eq00:001NZqeS00002lGt&count=1469023670&randid=250948437&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=250948437)

 One evening, in the mid-1960s in the synagogue and study hall of ***the Husyatin Rebbe***, **Rabbi Yitzchak Friedman**, in Tel Aviv, in Bialik Street, a man entered whose outer appearance was quite different than that of the usual crowd of chasidim sitting singly or in pairs, immersed in Torah study. His look was that of a typical Israeli, of middle age, with a *kippah* (yarmulke) on his head attached by a large clip.

 The man walked directly to the wall of bookcases and began scanning the shelves. Finally, he found what he was looking for â€“ a volume of*Ohr HaChayim*, the famous and beloved commentary on the Torah by the 18th century sage and kabbalist from Sali, Morocco and, in his later years, in Jerusalem.

 The man carried the book to a table in the corner of the hall, opened it to the Torah portion of the week, and began to learn it aloud with great enthusiasm.

 One of the chasidim, Rabbi Mordechai-Shraga Bauminger, named for his great-grandfather, the first Husyatin rebbe, youngest son of â€œthe holy Rhizhiner,â€ looked up from his tome of the Talmud. Something about the manâ€™s devoted study had attracted his attention. He wondered who he was, and why he had entered specifically the Husyatin center to study *Ohr HaChayim*, a set that can be found in every serious Torah library in the world.

 After a while, he looked up again and decided to go ask the man directly. He sat down next to him and initiated a conversation. With visible reluctance the man tore himself away from the *sefer*. But when he found out that the chasid speaking to him was a descendant of the first two Husyatin Rebbes, his eyes opened wide in wonder and he said, â€œIf so, perhaps you are the right person for me to tell what happened to me today and my connection to your maternal grandfather.

 The man inserted a piece of paper for a bookmark and closed the book. He composed himself for a moment and then began his tale.

 “My name is Natanel. I currently live in Haifa. I was born in the Western Ukraine, in a town where most of the inhabitants were Husyatin chasidim, including my parents. In 1937, while I was still a child, the Rebbe (**Rabbi Yisrael Friedman**), your grandfather, left the Ukraine to live in Israel. “Because of the extreme harsh conditions in the era, and also because the great distance of the Rebbe, my parents weakened greatly in their chasidic ways and ceased their connection to the Husyatin community.

 “When I became a teenager, I joined the Club for Zionist Fulfillment. There they cultivated in us the Zionist vision, the idealism of working for the land of Israel, the value of physical fitness and agricultural labor, and so forth. Unfortunately they offered no Torah classes there, or any respect for Jewish religiosity, and eventually our entire youth group relinquished all commitment to fulfill the Torah’s commandments.

 “The club also organized a group to make *aliyah*. Years later, soon after WWII, we were able to fulfill our dream.

 “Upon arrival in Israel we were full of idealism, enthusiasm and energy. But with the passage of time practicality crept in and the group slowly fell apart. Each one became primarily involved in building his own individual world.

 “For me, the dissolution of idealism and the Zionist dream led to an inkling of desire and a gradual return to my traditional roots. I began to wear a *kippah* again and to attend Torah lectures and classes, first sporadically and then more often. Eventually I returned to Shabbat observance, wrapped tefilin daily, and was much more careful about *kosher* diet.

 “During that time period I would sometimes recall a vision from my childhood: my father sitting at a table and studying *Ohr HaChaim* on the weekly Torah Reading. I resolved that I too would study *Ohr HaChaim*on a regular basis, and so I have done for years now.

 “One night a few weeks ago, after I went to sleep, I suddenly felt that I was choking horribly, strangling even. I could sense my heart ceasing to beat. Then I fell into a deep faint.

 “But then everything changed and I seemed to be flying upwards through the air. A unique radiant light was blinding my eyes. I became overwhelmed with the certainty that I was now in a spiritual realm, in the World of Truth.

 “Mysterious forms that I couldn’t recognize took hold of me and transported me to a brightly lit hall. A table stood in the middle. Two distinguished looking men were sitting on opposite sides. I understood that I was now in the Heavenly Court and that they were waiting for the chief judge to come and take his place in the chair between them so that my trial could begin.

 “Right then a distinguished, bearded elder entered the room and sat on a seat awaiting him. Before officially opening the case, the new arrival queried the other two judges, ‘Is it really already the time for this man to come up here?’

 “Silence.

 “A few moments later, the elder spoke again. ‘Is it not so that he faithfully and devotedly studies *Ohr HaChaim*?’

 “Silence.

 “Suddenly the courtroom disappeared, and again I was flying at great speed through the air, this time downwards. And then I was awake! Sitting up on my bed, trembling uncontrollably, terrified and emotionally overwhelmed.

 “The dream had a tremendous effect on me. It aroused and inspired me with the determination and inner strength to improve myself in all aspect of my life including of course to take extra care in maintaining my *Ohr HaChaim* study schedule.

 “This morning I came down to Tel Aviv to take care of some affairs. As I was walking along, I noticed three men in full chasidic garb further up the street. I could see from their formation that the two younger ones were escorting the older man between them. This aroused my curiosity to see what the subject of their respectful attention looked like, so I quickened my pace. When I caught a glimpse from the side of the contour of his face I almost fainted. He was the head judge of the Heavenly Court that I saw in my dream!

 “I had to find out who he was! I followed behind them discreetly until I found the opportunity to ask one of the young chasidim privately about the identity of the man they were escorting. He told me he was the *Admor* (Chasidic Rebbe) of Husyatin.

 “What a shock! At that moment a vision appeared before my eyes, a memory of my childhood when my parents were faithful chasidim, when my father would take me to the synagogue and I would see the Rebbe. This current Rebbe, who must be the grandson of Reb Yisrael from the Ukraine, looked just like him.

 “I was shaking with excitement. I decided to follow them. I knew I had to make a strong effort to speak to the Rebbe privately, even if that would prove to be difficult.

 “They led me here to the Husyatin center. I prayed *Mincha* (the afternoon prayer) there, and through a window I could see the Rebbe immersed in his prayer together with a *minyan*. Again I was reminded of the Husyatin chasidic atmosphere in my home town.

 “After the last *kaddish*, I requested of the Rebbe’s personal attendant to allow me to enter the Rebbe’s room for a private audience. When he exited the Rebbe’s room, he held the door open and signaled me to go in.

 “The Rebbe looked up at me with a penetrating stare. Then he said, kindly, ‘Who are you and what is your request?’

 “I was so overwhelmed with emotion I couldn’t bring myself to speak. When I finally regained control of myself, I said, ‘Do I really have to tell the Rebbe who I am? Was it not only two weeks ago that the Rebbe ruled in my favor for life in the Heavenly Court?’ Then I burst into uncontrollable tears.

 “When I finally calmed down, the Rebbe extended his hand to me for that traditional limp handshake, and while still holding my hand said, ‘*Nu*, G-d Almighty should bless you with long years and a good, prosperous life.’

 “I left his presence still in a very emotional state. I thought to myself the best thing to calm down would be to study some *Ohr HaChaim,* since in the merit of doing so I had been granted a new lease on life. So here I am.”

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***Source*:** Translated and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the Hebrew weekly,*Sichat HaShavua #*1381. Bio notes and photos courtesy of

//kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/suchostaw/sl\_husiatyn\_chassidic\_dynasty.html

*Biographical notes:* **Rabbi Chaim ben Moses ibn Attar** (1696-**15 Tammuz** 1743) was one of the most prominent rabbis in Morocco. In 1733 he decided to leave his native country and settle in the Holy Land. En route he was detained in Livorno by the rich members of the Jewish community who established a yeshiva for him. He resting place on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem is the occasion for a large annual pilgrimage on his *yahrzeit*.

**Husyatin**: There were four generations of Rebbes of the Husyatin branch of Ruzhin, of whom the 2nd and 4th are featured in the story above:

**Mordecai-Shraga ("Feivish") Friedman**, (1835-1894), youngest son of the holy Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin;

**Yisroel Friedman**, (1858-1949), named for his holy grandfather;
**Yaakov Friedman**, (1878-1957), son-in-law of Reb Yisrael and son of Yitzchak Friedman, the Buhash Rebbe, oldest grandson of the holy Ruzhiner;

**Yitzchok Friedman** (1900-1968), son of Reb Yaakov / grandson of Reb Yisroel and of the Buhash Rebbe for whom he was named,  4th and last Rebbe of Husiatyn (his only son,Mordecai Shraga, died in childhood).

***Connection*:** The 273rd yahrzeit of the Ohr HaChayim is on Tammuz 15 (this year: July 21).

*Reprinted from the Parshas Balak email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed,* [*www.ascentofsafed.com*](http://www.ascentofsafed.com) *ascent@ascentofsafed.com*

**The Sultan’s Trap and**

**Other Delightful Tales**

**For Kids of All Ages**

**By Daniel Keren**

(“**The Sultan’s Trap: And Other Miraculous Tales of Faith & Wonder**” by **Zalman Goldstein**, 261 pages, The Jewish Learning Group, 2016)

 I recently opened up a package not knowing what book had been mailed to me for possible review in The Jewish Connection. And when I saw the bright shiny cover of the book, I couldn’t help but smile as I realized that with the author’s name of Zalman Goldstein, it must be a Chabad collection of stories for children.

 But little did I realize that the author is the son of the late legendary “Uncle Yossi” Goldstein storyteller whose tapes of more than 50 Jewish stories backed up with songs have enchanted youngsters and their parents for perhaps more than a half century. Rabbi Yosef Goldstein of blessed memory was for more than 50 years a principal of a Bais Yaakov school in Boro Park and he came up with the idea of retelling over stories for children that he as a young child heard from his mother who in turn had heard those same stories from her father.

 And so with this new sparkling collection of delightful children’s stories titled “The Sultan’s Trap,” we have the fourth generation of that family relaying stories that not only are a delight to read and listen to, but also communicate more effectively than a shiur or lecture the beauty of the unique ethics and morals of the Jewish people. It is also a most fitting memorial tribute from the son (Zalman) to his father (Uncle Yossi) who was nifter three years ago just before Pesach.

 The book begins with a quote from Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, zt”l, the Sixth Grand Rabbi of Lubavitch: “A Jewish story often inspires love and awe of Heaven better than anything else.” In the tradition of his father “Uncle Yossi,” Zalman Goldstein has put together a most intriguing selection of 15 traditional stories and one more modern tale that is overflowing with ahavas Yisroel, (love of a fellow Jew), bitachon and emunah (trust and faith) in Hashem and other precious Jewish middos, values.



 I love reading inspiring Jewish stories for the very reason quoted by the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe. However, not all books put out by well-meaning authors captivate the imagination and spirit of the reader or listener. But “The Sultan’s Trap” is one such volume that your children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces or neighborhood children will love and gain spiritually from; perhaps even pestering you to read them over and over again until they are old enough to read these stories themselves at bedtime or as the author recalls from his childhood on long Shabbos afternoons.

 Lubavitcher and indeed most Chassidim have an extra special affinity for telling over or listening to stories, especially on Motzei Shabbos Melave Malkas. The stories chosen for “The Sultan’s Trap” are from traditional sources. And while a few of the stories I had read were familiar to me from earlier books or telling over of stories, even those with slight or not so slight changes; are rendered in my humble opinion into a better style than I remember having read or heard before.

 Most of these charming stories require one to book a ticket into the world of imagination. But, hey if Hashem could create our world and universe out of stunning nothingness, then even these delightful tales could have really happened and even if they didn’t happen, they should have happened and of course their morals and ethical teachings are important for both the reader and the listener to reflect upon and to try and incorporate into our lifestyles in this “real” world.

 A lot of effort was invested into collecting these stories and trying to relay them as accurately as possible” Of course, not every effort in and of itself is successful. But I am happy to say that in this case Zalman Goldstein has jumped all the hurdles and has in the process created an important book that will find a reception in every Jewish home whether already religiously observant or secular, but with an open mind to the beauties of a Jewish life as relayed in these charming stories. No doubt, the author’s father (Uncle Yossie) in Gan Eden is rejoicing in the literary achievement of his son. Definitely a great gift idea for kids of all ages!

 “The Sultan’s Tale” by Zalman Goldstein is available in Jewish bookstores or by clicking [www.JewishLearningGroup.com](http://www.JewishLearningGroup.com) or emailing Info@JewishLearningGroup.com

*Reprinted from the July 14, 2016 edition of The Jewish Connection.*

**The Sanzer Rebbe and the Father in Need of Money**

**To Marry Off a Daughter**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

 Some two hundred years ago in Poland lived a very holy Jew called the Rebbe of Sanz. His erudition and holiness were renowned but his advice and prophetic vision were simply super-human.\

 He was also known for his charity. People would often line up at his door and he would miraculously find the funds to cover their needs.

 One of his followers, who we will call Yosef, was a virtual pauper who never dreamed of asking anyone for help. But now he had no choice, he had found a suitable match for one of his daughters and needed five hundred guilder; a virtual fortune for wedding expenses; clothes, music, food a house and funds to get their home started and his wife convinced him that now was the time to ask the Rebbe.

 But when approached the Rebbe it didn't turn out as he expected. The Rebbe, rather than giving him the money, gave him five guilder and a piece of paper on which was written an address. "Go here and he will give you what you need. But remember, five hundred guilder and not a penny less!"

 Poor Yosef was disappointed but optimistic: he returned home, told his wife what the Rebbe said, packed a suitcase and two days later was knocking at the door bearing the address indicated on the paper.

 The door opened. A well-dressed, religious Jew opened and invited him in.

 "A donation?' The Jew asked, "For your daughter's wedding? Why of course! Here." He opened his wallet and held out two ten guilder notes with a smile of contentment as though to say 'I bet you never dreamed of getting so much, ehh?'

 But Yosef didn't take the money. He shook his head 'no', solemnly handed him the Rebbe's paper and informed his would-be benefactor that he was sent by the Rebbe of Sanz and was told he would be given five hundred guilder and not to settle for less.

 The rich Jew's mouth fell open in shock! Was this man serious? Why, five hundred guilder was twenty years wages!! Insane!!

 'Just one moment' he said and, trying to keep calm, went to call his down-to-earth, no-nonsense, tight-fisted wife who he was sure would talk this fellow into taking twenty.

 But to his amazement when she entered the room, had a look at Yosef and heard his demand in the name of the Rebbe of Sanz she fell silent, smiled, wiped a tear from her eye, turned to her husband and told him to please give him whatever he asked.

 Her husband's eyes widened like saucers but, after staring at her for a moment and realizing she was serious he dutifully went to the next room returned with a large stack of bills and counted out the entire sum to the visitor.

 "Now," she said after Yosef had the cash, "I would like us all to sit down and I will tell you why I am so happy to give this money."

 When they were all seated she began.

 "When I was a young girl, almost twenty years ago my mother and I traveled to a wedding of a distant relative. There were delays on the way and we arrived late but to our surprise when we got there the wedding had not yet begun and the room, although filled with people, was unusually somber and quiet.

 "In one corner, surrounded by her family, the bride was sitting and weeping on her mother's shoulder and the others were trying to comfort her. We asked what happened and the answer was that the parents of the groom for some reason didn't show up; the groom was there but not his parents. The Rabbi that was to perform the marriage ceremony sent messengers to their house but they weren't there and he began to suspect something was wrong. Perhaps the groom's mother wasn't Jewish or they were hiding something else. In any case he refused to marry them until his worries had been calmed.

 "Suddenly someone yelled out that the Rebbe of Sanz was in the city and perhaps he could save the day! The presiding Rabbi even agreed that if the Sanzer Rebbe would take responsibility he would do the ceremony. So they ran to bring him.

 "In just moments, a very short time later, the Rebbe entered. He was so holy and beautiful like a king! He stood there for a while in silence. He glanced at the groom and then took the parents of the bride into a side room. Afterward the mother of bride told me what happened.

 "He asked them 'How many children do you have?"

 'Seven' they answered.

 'Did you have more? Did any of your children pass away?"

 'Well, yes" the mother replied sadly. 'Many years ago one died in childbirth, then another passed away from smallpox at one year old and." She became choked up and stopped,

 So her husband continued. 'We had an eight year old son called Saul that drowned. It was ten years ago. He was a wild boy. I don't know how he made it to eight years old; he even had a big scar on his leg from when he jumped a high fence, almost lost his leg. Anyway, his friends said he dived into the river to show off and â€¦. There was a terrible current and well he just never came up. That was ten years ago and, well we really never forgot him."

 "The Rebbe of Sanz left the room, went over to the groom who was sitting alone in the corner reading psalms, took him off to a side, asked him to pull up his pant leg and well you can imagine the pandemonium when the Rebbe turned around and announced that Saul, their missing son, was the groom!!

 "The father fell to his knees, sobbing tears of joy hands raised in thanks to G-d, the mother almost fainted and everyone was screaming and hugging each other not knowing what to do.

 "Slowly everyone understood why his so-called 'parents' didn't come. It seems that ten years ago when everyone thought he had disappeared he really got washed up semi-conscious on a shore far down the river where an old, childless Jewish couple found him and took him home to recuperate. But when they saw he had lost his memory they decided to 'adopt him' and told him that he was really their son but that he must have forgotten.

 But now, because there was no similarity between them, they were afraid that people might ask questions so they didn't show up at the wedding.

 "Then the Rebbe held up his hand, and announced that the festivities should continue not as a wedding but as a reunion; but now, because there were two more Jews to marry off, anyone who would donate money to the brother and sister so they could find mates and marry would be blessed a hundred fold.

 "Everyone stood in line to give but when it came my mother's and my turn the Rebbe refused to take our donation! "The time will come" He said with a smile, 'That I will send someone to collect it.'

 And that is why I gave the 500 guilder now so willingly. This is the money the Rebbe was referring to back then.'

*Reprinted from the Parshas Balak 5776 email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*