**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Mattos-Masei 5773**

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**Shabbat in the Pub**

**By Ann Goldberg**

The GPS had not been invented when Shelly set off on a Friday afternoon many years ago to join the Bnei Akiva camp in the English countryside. The organizers always managed to find a farmer who welcomed young campers under adult supervision; thus they set up their tents and during the week took the opportunity to learn the halachot of building an eruv. There would be no problems on Shabbat and they would be able to carry within the campsite.

**Prepared a Delicious Shabbat Meal**

**With as Many Trimming as Possible**

Often they would have extra visitors over Shabbat. The cooks prepared as delicious a Shabbat meal as possible under the limited conditions, with as many trimmings as they could manage.

As a college student and senior member of the Bnei Akiva hanhalah, Shelly was meant to be one of those visitors. She set off early on Friday morning, but as time marched on she found herself deep in the countryside with just a vague idea of where she was going and the name of the farm – which no one she asked seemed to have heard of. Forget about no GPS; this was also way before cell phones had been invented. Shelly was totally out of contact with the campers.

**Driving Through One Picturesque**

**Village after Another**

She drove through one picturesque village after another, trying to follow her map’s route. Eventually, though, their quaintness began to wear rather thin and her panic started to increase. Although this was midsummer and Shabbat didn’t start until 8 p.m., she had no idea if she was even approaching the correct village and farm or was simply wandering farther and farther away.

The hours marched by and she realized that the chance that she’d find the camp before nightfall, and thus before Shabbat began, was becoming less and less likely. She was just going to have to spend Shabbat in the middle of the countryside. But where? There were no hotels, or even boarding houses, in these small villages – just the village pub (public house), always the focus of the local social life.

**Asking for a Room to Rent**

Shelly stopped at the next pub she saw and asked for a room to rent, where she could spend the night. Fortunately one was available, and after checking where the local grocery store was, she bought some fruits and vegetables, some tinned fish, and a few other kosher items. This would stave off her hunger pangs for the next day. She was sadly going to have to manage without challot and wine.

Upon returning to the pub, the helpful young man at the desk greeted her and told her to ring downstairs the next morning when she was ready for breakfast. Obviously she wasn’t going to eat any breakfast, but Shelly decided that a hot drink would be nice. She’d have to ask for it now, before Shabbat. “No problem,” the young man replied. “Just pick up the phone by the bed and I’ll send a hot cup of coffee up to your room when you wake up.”

**Asks to Order Coffee**

**For the Next Morning**

“But I’d like to order it now for 8 o’clock – if that’s okay,” Shelly said.

“But why order it now; maybe you’ll sleep in until after 8,” he said. “I wouldn’t want anyone to wake you up. Call when you want it.”

Realizing that she would have to offer a reason as to why she was ordering the coffee now, Shelly started to explain that she was Jewish and that from sundown that night until sundown on Saturday night she wouldn’t be able to use the phone.

“Ah, I understand. Wow, that’s really interesting. Sure, I’ll make a note now to send you up the coffee tomorrow morning,” he said.

Shelly turned to go upstairs to her room, relieved that the episode was over and anxious to light the candles she had just bought.

“Umm, Miss…” the young man’s voice called up to her. “Do you mind if I ask you a few questions about being Jewish and all that?”

Shelly patiently turned around. “No, of course not. Go ahead.”

“You see, I’ve always been a bit interested because my grandmother was Jewish. But I’ve never met a real Jew, you know, someone who practices being Jewish.”

Alarm bells went off in Shelly’s head.

“Which grandmother would that be? Your mother’s mother or your father’s mother?”

“My mother’s mother. Why?”

Shelly sighed. “Cancel the morning coffee,” she said, settling down to what looked like a long evening of explanations.

*Reprinted from the June 21, 2013 edition of The Jewish Press, from the Lessons in Emunah: True Stories with an Emphasis on Faith column edited by Naomi Mauer.*

**[You Can Try, but](http://matzav.com/you-can-try-but-you-can%e2%80%99t-hide-it" \o "Permanent Link to You Can Try, but You Can’t Hide It)**

**[You Can’t Hide It](http://matzav.com/you-can-try-but-you-can%e2%80%99t-hide-it" \o "Permanent Link to You Can Try, but You Can’t Hide It)**

**By S. Friedman**

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A number of years ago I worked for a gentleman who owned a large company that employed over 1,000 employees and was spread out amongst at least 10 separate facilities. I was one of the few frum people that worked there.

We were mostly people just getting our feet wet in the industry, and the principal owner felt it was incumbent upon him to afford fellow members of his community an opportunity. For that I am ever grateful, as I was on the receiving end of what the Rambam describes as the most virtuous form of tzedakah.

He was a very fair and accommodating superior, and I dutifully performed any task that was asked of me to the best of my ability. However, there was one point of contention between us, one that both of us felt strongly about.

My boss was a big believer in portraying a “corporate” image. He wanted every facet of his business to resemble the professionalism that one might expect from a Fortune 500 company. To that end, he was always dressed to the nines. A handsome man, his suave demeanor depicted to everyone the level of sophistication that he wanted others to aspire to.

**The Boss Didn’t Wear a Yarmuke**

**At His Places of Business**

He also did not wear a yarmulke while at any of his places of business. Being thought of as an “ultra-orthodox” Jew was the equivalent of being a Country Bumpkin in his eyes. He was forward thinking; not old fashioned. And he wanted to ensure that everyone thought as much of him.

This image that he tried to depict was extremely important to him. He approached me and shared with me his thought process, and was quite blunt in regards to how he didn’t want to be viewed as “the Jewish owner.” He criticized my color blind sense of fashion that resulted in my dark pants and white shirt every day wardrobe. My tzitzis, though tucked into my pants pockets, were visible and hence too stark of a reminder of my religiosity. My beard, though trimmed, was noted as well.

**Only a Fellow Jew**

**Would Be Turned Off**

In conclusion, he told me that he would not go so far as to suggest I remove my yarmulke, however, at the very least I should begin to wear blue shirts. I won’t go into the debate as to whether there is a right or wrong in wearing a colored shirt. One thing is for certain. In the context of corporate America, wearing a white shirt is certainly accepted business practice. It was only a fellow frum Jew who was familiar with our idiosyncrasies that was turned off by someone wearing an exclusively “yeshivishe” ensemble.

It was a few months later, and I was walking through the hallways of one of the facilities. As I wasn’t a familiar face there, I noticed the staff looking me over and trying to ascertain who I was. Then I overheard two ladies whispering to each other:

“See that Jewish guy there; I think that’s the owner.”

“Yeah, I think you’re right, but it might be his son because I think he’s older.”

So there I was, with my tzitzis in my pocket, white shirt and dark pants, beard and a yarmulke to top it all off, and here they thought that I was the boss! How could they have possibly confused me with a man who presented himself as someone who would grace the cover of the latest fashion magazines?

He had made a very concerted effort to remove any and all outward vestiges of his yiddishkeit, but to no avail. At the end of the day, be it for good or for bad, we are recognized as Jews. We are in golus, and the moniker “Jew” will usually bear a negative connotation. But try as you might, you cannot hide who you are. Maybe it’s better not to try.

Reprinted from the June 24, 2013 website of Matzav.com

**Reflections on Yiddish**

**Or More Than a Way**

**To Win a Spelling Bee**

**By Daniel Keren**

Yiddish got a big boost recently (May 30th) when Arvind Mahankali, a 13-year-old resident of Queens, New York whose parents hail from the Hyderabad, India won the 2013 Scripps National Spelling Bee by correctly spelling the Yiddish word “knaidel” (a small mass of leavened food) usually eaten with soup.



*Arvind Mahankali, winner of the National Spelling Bee, with the trophy.*

Jay Parker, the owner and chef of Ben’s Best Kosher Deli in Rego Park, Queens has responded to the triumph of Arvind, a fellow Queens resident and goy (a non-Jew) by creating a new menu item in honor of this year’s National Spelling Champion that will be called – the “Arvind mini knaidel.”



**The Mama Lashon of Ashkenazi Jews**

Jewish journalists have been having a field day over the news that the word which determined who won the American spelling bee came from a word whose origins come from Yiddish – the mama lashon (mother tongue) of that great wave of Jewish (Ashkenzai) immigrants who came to flee persecution in Europe and make new lives for their families in the free land of United States (and Canada) during the second half of the 19th Century and much of the last 20th Century.

Many Yiddish words have been incorporated into the English language since then and it is not unusual to hear a non-Jew, especially in the New York Metropolitan region toss out the term “meshuganah” when speaking about a competitor (especially an opponent in a political race.) Or when you are trying to tell a traffic cop what the other “reckless” driver did to you, he might cut you short by begging you not to hit him with the whole “megillah.”

**A More than Bissl Memory in Crown Heights**

I confess to not being a fluent Yiddish speaker although I can generally understand the gist of what other masters of that Germanic-based Jewish language are speaking. Indeed one of the startling epiphanies in my life occurred almost 30 years ago when I was spending a Shabbos in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. It is one of those few moments in one’s life that was so striking at the time that it can still be conjured up in my mind as though it had just occurred.

I was at the Raskin home (the fruit and vegetable one, not the fish Raskin) and one of the many fellow guests came up to me and started speaking in Yiddish. He looked Israeli and I replied by asking “Ata midaber Anglit u Ivrit?/Do you speak English or Hebrew?”)

**Du Bist a Yid?**

Indignantly he almost shouted at me “Du bist a Yid? Are you Jewish?). How could I be Jewish if I didn’t speak Yiddish? The reason his bitter comment still resonates in my memory is that he looked anything but an Ashkenazi. In fact once we started speaking (English,) he admitted that his family immigrated to Israel from Yemen on Operation Magic Carpet. I asked him if besides speaking Hebrew if Arabic (the language of Yemen) was his family’s mama lashon and he confessed that he did know how to speak that language.

So I asked him how he came to speak an Ashkenazi language in a seemingly fluent manner. He recalled that when he was six years old his grandfather (complete with Yemenite payot) took him on a bus from the mabarot (immigrant settlement) where other Yemenite Jewish youth were in danger of assimilating into the non-religious Zionist culture of the State of Israel in the early 1950s.

**Please Make a Mentsch**

**Of My Son**

The bus stopped in the Central Bus Terminal in Tel Aviv and the grandfather got on a second bus to take my “friend” to nearby Kfar Chabad. Getting off that bus, the two went to the Lubavitcher Yeshiva where the grandfather spoke to one of the mechanchim (teachers) and told him to take the young boy and make him strong in Yahadut (Judaism). I guess that would translate into Yiddish as a mentsch. He left his grandson in an environment where he had no choice but to learn and speak Yiddish fluently.

So what can an American-born Jew who didn’t grow up in Williamsburg, Boro Park or Monroe do to gain a bissl (little) proficiency in Yiddish? Menucha Publishers has just come out with “The Easy-Shmeezy GUIDE TO YIDDISH” by Moshe Sherizen who also grew up in Detroit where the only Yiddish words he heard growing up where shkoyahk (good job), tsu-gezunt (to health or stop sneezing) and oy vey!

**Learning a New Yiddish Word Each Day**

When Reb Sherizen went to learn in yeshiva in Yerushalayim he realized that there was a world of native Yiddish speakers and he began trying to learn the language by each day asking someone to teach him a new word. If you believe one of the introductory pages, this new Guide to Yiddish is a project of the Easy-Shmeezy Foundation complete with the Foundations Board of Trustees and International Board of Governors, including a Rabbi Yitzchok Jaeger of the British Empire.

“The Easy-Shmeezy Guide to Yiddish” promises that it will help you learn 1500 of the most common Yiddish words and expressions via clear and easy to understand lessons, with a special section on yeshivish, as well as songs and proverbs that will give you a real Geshmak!

**The Fool-Proof**

**J.E.T. System**

Reb Sherizen claims that his book is based on his fool-proof system for learning languages – the J.E.T. System. The J is for Jump into the language with confidence. The E is for Expand your vocabulary and T is for Talk, talk, and talk some more.

Among some of the important phrases you can learn from “The Easy-Shmeezy Guide to Yiddish” is “Hostu khasuna gehat? (Are you married?), “Ikh vil zayn a firlesher” (I want to be a fireman), “amol” (once upon a time,) “Vifil kost dos?” (How much does this cost?) and “A parveh tsholent iz nisht keyn tsholent” (A parve cholent isn’t a cholent.”

**Definitely a Fun Book**

I don’t know if you are going to actually learn Yiddish from this Guide. It depends on how committed you are. But you will definitely be able to pick up classic phrases that may surprise or amuse your Yiddish-speaking acquaintances. It definitely looks like a fun book to play around with. In addition to buying the miniature pocketsize paperback the author invites you to click [www.EasyShmeezy.com](http://www.EasyShmeezy.com) to purchase additional Mp3 lessons to help you improve your Yiddish speaking and click [www.YiddishAcademy.com](http://www.YiddishAcademy.com)

“The Easy-Shmeezy Guide to Yiddish” by Moshe Sherizen is available in bookstores or from the publisher by calling (718) 232-0856 or by clicking www.Menuchapublishers.com

**A Slice of Life**

**Book It**

**By Tzvi Jacobs**

It was 1999 and internet commerce was in its infancy. Six years earlier, I had received a blessing from the Lubavitcher Rebbe to publish a collection of my stories. I decided it was worth it for me to try to find a printer for my book on-line. I filled out a form and listed the specifications. During the next four weeks, I received quotes from six printing houses in the United States and one in Canada. The best price came from Canada.

**Called a Canadian Print House**

I called the Canadian print house. The cover thickness, the paper, the binding, everything sounded top quality - and the American dollar could buy more in Canada. Canada was the place to print. "What do I do next?"

"There's also shipping," the man said with a flat voice. " $1400."

"$1400! You're kidding, aren't you?" I asked.

"We're in Winnipeg. It's 1260 miles from here to your door in Morristown, New Jersey."

I waited but no other bids came in from Canada. Maybe there was a printer in Canada a bit closer, like around Montreal, I wondered. I knew one person in Montreal, Rabbi Ronnie Fine, the Rebbe's emissary in Queen Mary, Montreal.

"Do you know anyone who owns a printing house?" I asked.

**The Rabbi Suggests a Printing Agent**

"Sorry, I can't help you there," Rabbi Fine said. "Actually, there's a printing agent. He handles some of our printing jobs. His name is also Jacobs, Lorne Jacobs. Maybe you're related."

"I doubt it, our name was originally Karesh. Is Lorne Jacobs involved in your Chabad House?"

"No. He politely says that he's not interested. But he makes sure the jobs are high quality and he gets us good prices. I'll give you his number."

Even though it was a Sunday morning, I left a brief message on Mr. Jacobs answering machine. That afternoon I received a call from a man with a distinctive Canadian English accent. "I understand that you want to print a 200-page hardcover book with library binding and a four-color book jacket, and-"

I was confused. I hadn't left those details on his answering machine this morning.

"I haven't checked today's messages yet," said Mr. Jacobs.

Now I was really confused. "So how do you know all those details?" I asked.

**Nothing Happens by Accident**

"I picked up this information from the internet a few weeks ago and then misplaced it. A few minutes ago I opened a folder and there it was. Hold on." Lorne played my message. "This is too uncanny! And we share the same last name. Quite a coincidence."

"Right, but nothing happens by accident, it's all orchestrated to the most minute detail by One Above! In fact, that's the theme of every story in my book."

I emailed the file of the book to Lorne. He called back two days later. "You know, it's your fault that I overslept this morning and missed an appointment," Lorne said with the voice of a teacher scolding a student. (He later told me that he was a retired college chemistry teacher.)

"Because of me?"

**“You’re an Excellent Story Teller”**

"Yes, I started reading your stories last night and Rhona, my wife, heard me laughing and crying. So she read the next story out loud and I read the next one. We couldn't go to sleep until we finished the book. I've read a lot of books - you're an excellent story teller."

"Thank you, but believe me, you should see my first drafts. My wife tears them up. Speaking of which, she wants to know when can we go to print?"

"Hold on. I see that you have never printed a book. Do you have an ISBN number? You need a barcode. And what's going to go on the inside flaps of your back jacket, and on the book cover itself...."

Lorne and I spoke almost every evening. He re-read the stories and asked questions about Divine Providence, do you really believe that G-d wrote the Bible and that the world was created in six days, don't you believe in evolution, if G-d is in charge why the Holocaust, are Jews better than Gentiles... The questions didn't end.

"If you're going to put so much effort and money into this book," Lorne said, "it has to look first class. I know you have no money to hire a professional typesetter. Let me see what I can do."

Day after day, story after story, Lorne tweaked every story, nearly every line of the book. The book became a labor of love and a journey to discover his own Jewish roots. One mitzva (commandment) at a time, Lorne and Rhona made their kitchen kosher, lit Shabbat candles and said the Kiddush prayer on a glass of wine, studied Torah and Chasidic teachings, until they blossomed into fully-observant Jews.

**Found an Even Better Price**

Lorne oversaw every step of the publishing and printing of the hardcover edition of my book From the Heavens to the Heart. He found even a better price than the Winnipeg printer and shipping was two-thirds less. And when the inside flaps of the full color book jacket didn't fold exactly right, Lorne made sure all 3000 copies were reprinted. "A book with the Rebbe's blessing must be perfect," Lorne said.

These days, if you visit Chabad Queen Mary in Montreal on Shabbat, listen out for a voice that resonates with authority: "Please turn to page 200 and rise for Aleinu." That man with the smile - that's Shimon Leib - Lorne - Jacobs, Rabbi Fine's right hand man.

*Reprinted from last week’s edition of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization. Tzvi Jacobs lives with his family in Monsey, New York and works as a medical writer at Purdue Pharmaceuticals. In his spare time, Tzvi writes stories. The kindle version of From the Heavens to the Heart can be found at:* [*amzn.com/B00CM2RWQE*](http://amzn.com/B00CM2RWQE)

**An All-Purpose Kadish**

**By Yerachmiel Tilles**

Pressburg was one of the most important cities in the Austro-Hungarian empire, and its *yeshivah* was among the largest and most respected in all of Europe.

In the mid-1800s, there lived a wealthy merchant who had a large store in the center of the city. He was well-respected and active in the Jewish community, and also known for his generosity. One charitable custom of his was remarkable. Each day he would count the proceeds of his business, calculate how much was profit, and from that separate 10% for *maaser* (tithe), which he would deliver daily to the *yeshivah*.

Tragically, this outstanding man suddenly took ill and passed away at a relatively early age, leaving behind a widow and five young daughters. His wife was a clever and energetic woman who had always helped her husband in the business and knew it well. After his death, she took it over and maintained its prosperity. She was also careful to continue in her late husband’s generous ways, and each day would deliver the *maaser* from the profits to the *rosh yeshivah*, the illustrious Ketav Sofer.

**Arranged for Torah Scholars to**

**Say Kaddish for Her Husband**

Immediately upon her husband’s passing, as she had no sons, she asked the *rosh yeshivah* to arrange for Torah scholars to say *kaddish* for her husband for the entire eleven months, and also each successive year on the *yahrzeit*. She also requested that a second *kaddish* be said each day, having in mind all those souls who have no one saying *kaddish* for them.

This went on for nearly ten years. Sometimes the *maaser* would be as much as hundreds of kroner a day. But however much it was, she would always inquire to make sure that the *yeshivah* was keeping its side of the bargain.

But then the wheel turned. Instead of daily profits, there began to be losses. Even so, the widow maintained her schedule of appearing daily at the *yeshivah*, except that she would inform the *rosh yeshivah* that today, unfortunately, she had nothing to give. Still, she would persist to ask if they were still saying the *kaddish*es even though she was no longer able to contribute financial support. They would assure her that of course they were, and she should not worry.

**Only Some in the Yeshiva Knew of**

**Her Deteriorating Business Situation**

Day after day her situation got progressively worse, until finally she had to start selling some of her jewelry and other valuables in order to put food on the table for her daughters. No one was aware of her deteriorating situation, except for the senior students and staff of the *yeshivah*, who knew that her business was virtually bankrupt.

One day a matchmaker came to her house and, after some pleasantries, said, “My dear lady, your daughters have all matured nicely and grown quite pretty. Perhaps because of your extensive involvement in the business, you haven’t noticed that it is time for them to get married. I am confident that I can find many outstanding *yeshivah* students that would be interested in them for you to choose from; just tell me how much dowry you are willing to provide for each one.”

She wisely decided not to admit her true situation to him, and instead merely said that she would think it over and then get back to him about his offer. He left, and she burst into tears. Afterwards, she dressed and hurried to the *yeshivah*. She poured out her misery to the *rosh yeshivah*. Sobbing, she said, “I just don’t understand why my situation deteriorated so.” Again, she asked if the *kaddish*es were still being said, and he comforted her that they were.

**Suddenly the Door Opened**

Suddenly the door opened. A distinguished-looking older man entered, turned to the widow, and asked her why she was crying. He told her that he knew of her desperate situation and that he was prepared to help. He then requested of the *rosh yeshivah* that they all go into his office, and that two scholars of the *yeshivah* join them. The *rosh yeshivah* acceded, and summoned two of his five great disciples present that year: his son, Rabbi Shimon Sofer, and Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld.

When they were all assembled, the mysterious guest said, “I know you have five daughters of marriageable age. Let’s figure. Each one needs a thousand kroner for dowry money, and another thousand kroner each for the expenses of the wedding and for buying furniture and setting up a household. So, that is two thousand for each of the five, or ten thousand altogether. Plus, to put your business back on its feet, you need another ten thousand kroner, so that makes twenty thousand altogether.

**Writes Out a Check for**

**Twenty Thousand Kroner**

“All right, then,” he said, “I’ll write you a check.” Whereupon he took a checkbook out of his pocket, tore off a check, wrote the woman’s name on it, inscribed it for twenty thousand kroner and signed it! Before handing it to her, however, he asked the two young scholars to sign on the back as witnesses to the transaction. He also asked them to take out their personal notebooks so he could sign in each a sample of his signature, in case the signature on the check would be challenged. Turning back to the woman, he told her that she should present the check at the government bank when it opened at nine o’clock, and they would honor it. Then he left as suddenly as he had come.

All present were shocked still in disbelief. It was as if they were sharing a dream. Then one of the young rabbis jumped up. “A man like that could really help the *yeshivah*,” he said excitedly. “Let’s go ask him.” The two ran out and searched, but they couldn’t find him or anyone who had seen him.

**The Widow Goes to the Bank**

At nine the next morning, the widow was at the bank. The guard at the door directed her to one of the tellers, to whom she showed the check. He looked up the records and told her there was sufficient funds in the account to cover the check, but for such a huge sum he has to first get permission from the manager. He asked her to wait, and went to the administrative section. There he presented the check to the head of the bank, who took one look at it and fainted!

Pandemonium broke loose. People were running this way and that. The police came, and after questioning a few employees, confined the astonished businesswoman in a security room and locked the door, pending further investigation.

**The Doctor Revives the Bank Manager**

The doctor that was summoned quickly revived the bank manager. As soon as he gained consciousness, the manager asked that the woman who had brought the check be shown in to him. When told she had been locked up by security, he said that he must go to her; a great mistake had been made, to lock up such a righteous woman. He went quickly and, after apologizing, invited her to accompany her into his office.

“Tell me, please,” he opened, after they were seated, “how did you get this check?”

She told him of her difficulties and the sudden appearance of her unknown benefactor. She explained about her deceased husband and his practice of daily *maaser*, and of the *kaddish*es she had arranged through the *yeshivah* for him and for those souls who had no one to say *kaddish* for them.

He asked her: if she would see her benefactor again, or his picture, would she recognize him? She said yes. She added that two rabbis from the *yeshivah* were official witnesses to the whole episode, and that their signatures are on the back of the check, and that the man had also signed in their personal notebooks. The manager was excited to hear this, and after looking at their signatures, contacted the *yeshivah* to ask that Rabbi Sonnenfeld and Rabbi Shimon Sofer come to his office.

They came and confirmed all that the woman had said. The bank manager then told the three of them that he would personally honor the check, as it was drawn on his own family account, but that his wife had to endorse it too. He then sent for his wife with the message that she should come quickly, because people were waiting for her, but first she should collect all the family photographs in the house and bring them with her.

**The Banker Manager’s**

**Wife was Not Jewish**

Although the bank manager was a Jew, his wife was not. When she arrived, he asked the widow and the two rabbis to wait in a different room. He told his wife what was going on, and said, “Let’s see if the woman can identify the man who signed the check from among these photographs.” She declared that if it all turned out to be true, she would convert to be Jewish.

The manager then spread out all of the photos on his desk. He asked each of the three to enter separately and see if the man who gave the check appeared in any of them. Each one confidently picked out the same person.

The bank manager called everyone in. “Do you know who is this man who gave the check?” he asked. “It is my father, the manager of the bank before me. But he has been dead for ten years!

“I must confess,” he told them, “that I never said *kaddish* for him. Last night he appeared to me in a dream. He said that he had been saved from Gehinnom by the *kaddish*es that she had arranged for the *yeshivah* scholars to say for those souls for whom *kaddish* was not being said, and now that she was in difficulty we must help her. He said that he would give her a check for twenty thousand kroner, and that if I didn’t pay it, he would strangle me in my sleep.

**Told the Frightening**

**Dream to My Wife**

“I woke up, frightened. In the morning I told my wife the dream, and she was disturbed too. When the check was shown to me at the bank, I fainted. I knew then that the dream was true.

“I will pay the twenty thousand my father promised, for it is certainly a deserving cause. Not only that,” he added, turning to the woman, “I will add another twenty thousand of my own, because you fulfilled my obligation for me, and helped my deceased father’s soul with the *kaddish*-saying you arranged.”

He addressed the three of them again. “I fully regret my lapse from Judaism. I see now that our G‑d is the one true G‑d, and He gives to all their just reward. I resolve that from now on I will fulfill His commandments as revealed in our Torah. My wife, too, has reaffirmed her promise to convert and to live in accordance with Jewish law. Please guide us to understand what we have to do.”

He instructed the teller to give the woman forty thousand kroner. The first thing she did was to give ten percent of it to the *yeshivah*. Soon thereafter, her business waxed prosperous again, and her five daughters made good marriages with G‑d-fearing young Torah scholars.

*Connection to the last week’s Torah reading:* the five orphaned daughters of Tzelafchad.

Translated and retold from *Otzar Hamaasiyos*, vol. 1, pp. 42–47, in the name of Rabbi Y. Shapira, who heard it from Rabbi Sonnenfeld himself. In honor of the *yahrzeit* of my mother, Ella bas Sarah-Yehudis & Eliyahu HaLevi

**Biographical Notes**

*Biographical notes:* Rabbi Avraham Binyamin Schreiber (1815–1875), known as the Ketav Sofer after the title of his halachic responsa, was the son of the illustrious Torah giant the Chasam Sofer, Rabbi Moshe Schreiber (1762–1839), and his successor as the head of the Pressburg *yeshivah*, the most prestigious in the Austro-Hungarian empire and the largest in all of Europe.

Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848–1932), the one from whom we know this story, studied at the Pressburg *yeshivah* from 1865 to 1869. He was a major Torah sage of the Ashkenazi community in the Old City of Jerusalem for nearly sixty years, and its official leader after the death of Rabbi Shmuel Salant in 1909.

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