**Shabbos Stories for**

**Yom Kippur 5781**

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**Signing Off the Book**

**By Rabbi Paysach Krohn**

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**Rabbi Paysach Krohn Rabbi Philip Moskowitz**

 A number of years ago, I spent a weekend in Boca Raton, Florida and heard the following remarkable story from Rabbi Philip Moskowitz.

 A cousin of his had grown up irreligious and gone to secular schools, although he possessed a rudimentary knowledge of what Shabbat, Kashrut and Jewish practice involved. Nonetheless, his upbringing lent itself to little religious affiliation, and once he had graduated high school, he entered the Israeli army and continued remaining irreligious.

 Given the immense pressure of the army, once he had finished, he decided to take some time off and tour Mumbai, India. Yet the more time he spent out of Israel, the less religious he became. Sooner than later, he had dropped everything and was completely out of touch from any and every vestige of Jewish life.

 Once night, as he sat in a bar in Mumbai with his friends, he heard a strange, bellowing sound. He recognized it faintly, though he couldn’t put his finger on what it was. Waiting just seconds more, he heard it again. And then it clicked. It was the sound of the Shofar.

 He immediately made his way outside the bar and waited to hear the sound again. He couldn’t make out from where it had come just seconds ago. But then again, from down the block, the reverberating sound of the Shofar went off. Shaken, he immediately headed back to his apartment and began making phone calls.

 What was going on? Why was he hearing the Shofar being blown? Upon inquiry, he learned that the prior day was none other than Yom Kippur, and the sounds of the Shofar had been blown by the rabbi of a small shul just down the street, indicating the end of the holiday.



 He couldn’t believe it. He had forgotten that it was Yom Kippur. True, he had just about zero connection to Judaism, but Yom Kippur was Yom Kippur. The holiest day of the year had just gone by, and he hadn’t had a clue. With a heavy heart full of remorse over how far he had drifted from his family roots of Judaism, he began tearing up. He had become so unaffiliated as a Jew that it pained him to realize where he was and what he was doing with his life.

 Deciding that it was time for a change, he began packing his bags, and booked a ticket to Israel. The next morning, he left Mumbai, returned to Israel and expressed interest in learning about Judaism.

 His family could not believe that such a sudden and drastic shift could have occurred, though nothing deterred him from progressing forward in his studies. For the next several years, he spent his days learning Torah and creating a new, religious life for himself. He eventually married and began raising a religious family. Everything had changed from that one night when he heard the sound of the Shofar and it had literally awakened him to turning his life around.

**A New Insight into the Words of Part of U’nesaneh Tokef**

 As Rabbi Moskowitz related this powerful story to me, he added that it had provided him with new insight into the words recited as part of U’nesaneh Tokef, during the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur prayers. We say, “Hashem opens the Book of Memories [of each individual], and it reads by itself, and the hand of every person signs off [all that has been recorded] …”

 Why does it say that the hand of every person will sign off on what has transpired for each individual? Shouldn’t it only be the person whose life is in question that signs off? “Now I know the answer,” explained Rabbi Moskowitz.



**The Jewish Book of Life**

 The person who blew that Shofar, which my cousin ended up hearing, will likely never know how that one small act impacted another Jew in such a life-changing, powerful way. And equally so, my cousin will likely never get to know which rabbi blew that Shofar.

 However, at the end of a person’s life, this information will come to light. Hashem will summon the rabbi who unknowingly inspired my cousin and request of him to sign the book which recorded my cousin’s life. And why will that be so? Because he had an influence on him. Each person will be asked to sign the books of the people they have influenced, and similarly, they will have their own books signed by those who have inspired them. That is the meaning of “The hand of every person will sign off all that has been recorded [for that individual].”

 What is the lesson we are to learn? We are to get close to people we can impact and inspire, and likewise, surround ourselves with people who can impact and inspire us. In this way, we will have a hand in leveraging the spiritual growth of our fellow Jews and ourselves included, and signing off on all that comes to fruition from that initial spurt and spark of inspiration.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Vayelech 5780 email of TorahAnytime Newsletter as compiled and edited by Elan Perchik.*

**Story** #**1139**

**The Kol Nidrei Plot**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](https://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=ABC%20%2D%205774&msgNum=0000u%5eW0:001Tako%5e0000012l&count=1599159442&randid=1173690538&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=2&randid=1173690538)

 One of the members of the Jewish community in Berditchev was a fierce *mitnaged* (opponent) of the Chassidic movement in general and **Rabbi Levi-Yitzchak** in particular. He tried his utmost to cause disturbances in the Rebbe’s holy work. Despite the many insults suffered from him, he never answered him back. This infuriated the *mitnaged* even more. In his heart he concocted an entire plot on how to put Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to shame in public.

 Since he knew that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak had a beautiful voice and that many people always came to hear him praying on the holy day of Yom Kippur, and especially the prayer of *Kol Nidrei*, he made up his mind to disturb Rabbi Levi Yitzchak in this prayer specifically.

 On the eve of the holy day, the *mitnaged* came to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak’s house and asked to speak to the rabbi in private. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak welcomed him in, and his opponent explained to him that because it was the Eve of Yom Kippur and each person must ask forgiveness from people whom he might have hurt during the year, he also wanted to ask for forgiveness for all that he had done to the rabbi.

 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak immediately forgave him with a full heart.

 His new “friend” then took out a big bottle of vodka that he had brought with him, containing 96% alcohol. He asked the rabbi to say a *l’chaim* as a sign of forgiving him. He poured out a big glass of vodka and handed it to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak. The Rabbi said a *l’chaim* and blessed his opponent with a good and prosperous year.



 When the *mitnaged* was about to leave, he turned to the rabbi and said that since he was not sure that the rabbi had forgiven him with a full heart, he wanted the rabbi to say a *l’chaim* once again. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak accepted his request and once more the *mithnaged* poured him a full glass of vodka.

 The *mitnaged* went towards the door, as if intending to leave the *tzadik*’s room, but instead turned around and came back, asking the rabbi to say just a small *l’chaim* for him and then another one...and then.

 And Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, the defender of all Israel and the lover of his people, how could he refuse the request of a Jewish man on the Eve of Yom Kippur? In the end, the *mitnaged* made sure that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak finished the whole bottle of vodka.

 The man hoped that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak would be unable to pray properly due to the influence of the large amount of vodka that he had drunk. Maybe he would vomit or do something else that would portray him in a negative light to the large congregation attending the *Kol Nidrei* prayers in the synagogue.

**On the Holiest of Holy Days**

 It was twilight time. All the synagogues were filled with Jews, standing in awe on this holiest of holy days. The last Jews hurried along, dressed in their white robes and prayer shawls, in order to get to big synagogue in Berditchev where Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was to officiate. In the background, quiet words of *Tehilim* were being recited. Everybody was busy making a final spiritual reckoning, purifying his soul before the Day of Forgiveness. Within a few moments the shadows of darkness would descend on the city and the Holy Day would commence. The awe of the Holy Day was clearly felt upon the faces of all the people in the big synagogue.

 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, wrapped up in his prayer shawl, rose to approach the Holy Ark. The sound of his sweet voice, so full of emotion, could be heard in every corner of the synagogue. The Kol Nidrei prayer had begun.

 The whole congregation was lifted above the physical reality, borne by the exalted words of prayer emanating from Rabbi Levi Yitzchak. And the whole congregation of the sons of Israel shall be forgiven...

**The Mitnaged Arrived to See the “Drunk Man’s Show”**

 Even the *mitnaged*, who had arrived specially to see the drunk man’s show could not but feel the impact of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak’s prayers and admire his beautiful voice, so full of emotion and devotion. Not the smallest reminiscence was felt of drinking a whole bottle of vodka containing 96% alcohol.

 After the evening prayers were completed, nearly everybody remained in the *shul* to recite the book of *Tehilim* (Psalms), as is customary on this night.

 When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak reached the verse (Tehilim 41:12) “By this I knew that You wanted me, since my enemy will not cause harm upon me”, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak repeated this verse over again.

 Suddenly he turned to the people in the synagogue and said: “How did King David, who had so many opponents, know that he had found favor in G-d’s eyes? The answer is: since my enemy will not cause harm to me which can be understood in an additional sense that my enemy will not be harmed because of me.’

 The *mitnaged* understood full well towards whom these words were directed. He realized that the rabbi was arousing compassion for him, that he the opponent should not be punished because of what he had intended to do against Rabbi Levi Yitzchak.

 There words of pure love entered his heart. He became a changed person, and soon thereafter, a true follower of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev.

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 **Source:** From “Chassidic Gems”, compiled by Tuvia Litzman, who heard it from Rabbi Levi Pressman.

 **Connection:** Seasonal -YOM KIPPUR!

**Biographical note:** **Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev** [of blessed memory: 5500 - 25 Tishrei 5571 (1740 - Oct. 1810)] is one of the more popular rebbes in chasidic history. He was a close disciple of the *Maggid of Mezritch*, successor to the *Baal Shem Tov*. He is best known for his love for every Jew and his perpetual intercession before Heaven on their behalf. Many of his teachings are contained in the posthumously published *Kedushat Levi*.

*Reprinted from the Yom Kippur 5780 email of KabbalaOnline.com, a project of Ascent of Safed.*

**Yussie's Yom Kippur Prayer**

**By [Zalman Velvel](https://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/15464/jewish/Velvel-Zalman.htm%22%20%5Co%20%22Browse%20more%20articles%20by%20Velvel%2C%20Zalman)**



 Yussie Yablonsky, aged fifty-six, sat on the bench by the parking lot of his synagogue, Bais Chaim. He studied the congregation as they headed toward the front doors. The men looked prosperous and proud in their dark suits, the women were radiant in their new dresses, and the children looked like dress-up dolls even when they were misbehaving.

**Yussie’s Worn Out Clothes**

 Yussie looked down at what he was wearing. His green jacket was worn through at the right elbow, his red striped shirt was missing two buttons, and his blue pants had a cuff that had come undone. He could feel the damp grass through the holes in the soles of his shoes.

 Michael Fein, the president of Bais Chaim, drove up in a brand-new, jet-black Lexus. He parked in his assigned spot, opened the door and stepped out like a king. He smoothed the wrinkles from his expensive suit, straightened his silk tie, and patted down his styled hair.

 He walked around the car and opened the door for his wife. She stepped out wearing a French designer dress, patent leather high heels, and a matching Gucci bag. Their children, a handsome boy of twelve and a pretty girl of eleven, joined them as prince and princess. Together, the wealthiest Jewish family in Sunshine, a little town near Miami, strutted toward the entrance of the synagogue. Once inside, Michael Fein sat in the first row, next to the rabbi, in the seat of honor.

 Yussie inhaled the warm October air that was settling in. Sundown was approaching, signaling the start of Yom Kippur, the High Holy Day, the Day of Atonement. Jews around the world would observe this holiday the same as the Jews in Sunshine; they would take off from work, go to synagogue, and fast for the next twenty-five hours. Some would spend most of those hours in synagogue, praying, begging G-d's forgiveness for their sins committed during the year.

**Unlike the Congregants Yussie Had**

**No Job to Go To After Yom Kippur**

 Like the rest of the congregation, Yussie was going to take the next day off. However, unlike them, he had no job to go to. Six weeks earlier, he had lost his job picking up trash along the Florida highways because of budget cuts.

 Yussie planned to attend services for a few hours this night, walk home, and then return tomorrow. The day after that, disaster loomed.

 On that approaching disastrous day, Marshall O'Neill had a 1 P.M. appointment to evict Yussie from his tiny apartment. He would put Yussie's third-hand furniture and meager belongings out on the curb, change the locks, and then escort Yussie to his new home, the streets of Sunshine.

 Yussie listened to his stomach growl. The rest of the congregation had a large and elaborate meal before starting the fast. Yussie finished the last of his oatmeal yesterday morning, and had nothing to eat for a day and a half. It would not be an easy fast for him. Already he was starving, and he had to sit down because he felt light-headed and dizzy.

**He Would Have Preferred to Observe**

**The Yom Kippur Laws Voluntarily**

 Already he was starving Yussie believed he was observing Yom Kippur like a good Jew. He was taking the day off from work and fasting. He would have preferred to have performed these two observances voluntarily, rather than due to unemployment, starvation, and homelessness.

 Inside Bais Chaim, the congregation was captivated. Cantor Bushevsky, with his beautiful tenor voice, was at the dais singing *Kol Nidreh*, the opening prayer.

 Rabbi Yaakov Levi, whose nickname was Yankee, was seated next to Michael Fein. Yankee was wearing a *kapata*, the black suit of a Chossid, and his long dark beard made him look older than his thirty-two years. It was going to be a serene night for the rabbi. The cantor would conduct the service, and the rabbi would deliver a short sermon at the end. Rabbi Levi leaned back, closed his eyes, and began his ascent into a peaceful, holy state of mind.

 But no matter how the rabbi tried, his thoughts were blocked.

 Something, or someone, was missing. Something necessary, but he could not put his finger on it. He looked around at the sea of atoning faces in his congregation and took inventory of the souls entrusted to him. Everyone appeared to be there... except for the Schwarzes, who were visiting their parents in Palm Beach... and the Frisches... they were with their daughter in Canada... and Morris Steinberg... he was in the hospital recovering from a gall bladder operation.

 The rabbi glanced over at the column in the back of the synagogue. He strained his ears, but he did not hear Yussie's telltale snoring behind it. That was it! He waited until Cantor Buschevsky asked the congregation to stand, and then the rabbi slipped quietly to the back.

**Yussie’s Special Place was Empty**

 Yussie's special place was empty. The Rabbi saw him outside before services started, but where was he now? With Yussie, who knew?

 "Please, G‑d, would you mind hearing Yussie's forgiveness prayer out here? "Rabbi Levi exited out the rear door of the synagogue. He looked around the backyard and the parking lot until... there was Yussie. He was sitting on a bench, looking up at the sky. He seemed lonely and lost. The rabbi approached unnoticed. He stopped when he heard Yussie talking out loud.

 "G‑d, I am sorry," Yussie began. "I want to go inside to pray, but I haven't eaten anything for a day and a half, and I am afraid I will pass out and embarrass myself in front of the others. So, please, G‑d, would you mind hearing Yussie's forgiveness prayer out here?"

 Yussie closed his eyes and bowed his head. Then he looked up again.

**In Place of the Special Yom Kippur Prayer Book**

 "G‑d, I do not have the special Yom Kippur prayer book, where it lists all the sins, so I'll go through the Ten Commandments, if You don't mind."

 Yussie closed his eyes again and lowered his head.

 "First, You are my L-rd, and I *do* love You with all my heart." Yussie held up one finger.

 "I have not worshipped any other G‑d's." Yussie held up a second finger.

 "Uh oh," Yussie said, holding up a third finger. "I did take Your name in vain. Once, when I accidentally ran the stick with the nail on the end of it into my shoe – you know, the stick I used to pick up trash by the highway – well, it *hurt*, and without thinking, I said, 'G‑d XXXX it!'"

 Yussie looked up and sighed. "G‑d, I'm sorry. I did not mean to blame You. It was all Yussie's fault... by the way, thank You for not giving me an infection."

 Yussie bowed his head again and continued, "I remembered Shabbat, and kept it holy." Yussie held up a fourth finger now.

**Recalling His Shabbat Desecration**

 "Uh oh! Wait a minute!" Yussie looked up. "There was one time, about two months ago, when I lit a candle after sundown because the power company turned off the electricity - I could not pay the bill - and I could not find my false teeth. I needed them to eat supper. I'm sorry."

 Yussie bowed his head again and continued. "I honored my parents. I said Kaddish for both of them on the anniversary of their passing." He had all five fingers on his right hand raised now.

 He raised a finger in his left hand.

 "Murder? Who could think of such a thing!" he exclaimed.

 He raised a second finger on his left hand.

 "The seventh commandment?" Yussie looked up and laughed. "There is no woman that wants me, so I am safe there, too."

 Yussie paused, looking down at the eighth and ninth fingers he raised. "I did not steal. I also did not lie or bear false witness."

 Yussie raised his last finger, and then closed his hands.

 "Well, there you have it, G‑d. All totaled, three sins.""Did I covet? Yes, G‑d, I coveted. You know that I have been out of work for six long weeks now, and you also know that the day after tomorrow I will be evicted by the marshall. This morning I saw Felix Lopez walking to work... you know he has a great job at the Post Office with health benefits and a retirement plan.

 Well, I coveted his job. I am sorry. You know I wish I had a good job and did not have to run to the emergency room at the hospital every time I get sick... and I worry what I will do when I am too old to work... but I am willing to wait until you find something for me. In the meantime, G‑d, I promise, I will not covet Felix Lopez's job anymore."

**Wiping a Tear from His Eye**

 Yussie looked up and wiped a tear from his eye.

 "Well, there you have it, G‑d. All totaled, three sins – one curse, one Shabbat mistake, and a coveting. This year has not produced a great harvest of wrongs for your Yussie. It is not so easy to sin when you have so little. Perhaps next year, if You give me a next year, You will allow Yussie more blessings, so he will have more temptations."

 Rabbi Levi tiptoed quietly back to the synagogue's rear door. He went to the kitchen and took two bagels and a small container of milk from the refrigerator. He walked back to Yussie, and when he got near, he cleared his throat. Yussie looked over at him.

 "Yussie, good Yom Tov," Rabbi Levi called out.

 "Rabbi!" Yussie said, jumping up. "I am sorry. I lost track of the time. I will come in now."

 Yussie weaved around, and then fell down. The Rabbi helped him up, brushed him off, and then gently placed him back on the bench.

**Offering Yussie Some Bagels and Milk**

 "Yussie, G‑d cannot accept your fast until you are strong enough to risk it. Here." Rabbi Levi handed Yussie the bagels and milk.

 "Are you sure, Rabbi?" Yussie asked, his mouth watering.

 "Yes, I am sure. We still have a few minutes until sundown. Go ahead. Eat, Yussilah."

 Yussie ate ravenously and it pleased the rabbi to give Yussie so much pleasure with such simple food.

 "Would you like more?" the Rabbi asked after Yussie finished.

 "No, that has quieted my belly. Now I can begin my fast, Rabbi."

 The two men sat there, looking up at the darkening sky.

 "Rabbi, I am in trouble," Yussie began, looking into the Rabbi's eyes. "Can you help me?"

 The rabbi patted Yussie's shoulder. "I will try, Yussilah."

 Yussie explained to the rabbi how he was out of work and had no money and that he was going to be evicted. Rabbi Levi listened patiently, even though he already knew. When Yussie was finished, he looked once again in the Rabbi's eyes and said, "Please, Rabbi, please help me... I'm scared."

 They were interrupted by the sound of footsteps behind them. The rabbi looked over his shoulder and there was Michael Fein approaching. The rabbi studied the man as he came closer. What was it about him that radiated power? His strut, his posture, or his unyielding stare?

**“Rabbi, Why Are You Out Here?”**

 "Rabbi, why are you out here?" Michael Fein asked.

 "I am keeping a friend company, Michael. You know Yussie Yablonsky, don't you?"

 "No," Michael answered coldly. He did not offer to shake hands.

 "Rabbi, I would like to talk to you," Michael said.

 "So sit. We'll talk."

 "I would like to do it in private, if you don't mind." When Michael shot a look of disdain at Yussie, revulsion welled up inside Rabbi Levi.

 "Michael," the Rabbi said, "it would be rude of me to leave my friend, Yussie."

 "Rabbi, I don't mind." Yussie said as he tried to stand up, but the rabbi held him back.

 The rabbi turned to Michael. "Michael, if you want to talk, please sit here and let's talk. You're among friends."

 Michael Fein clenched his fists and stared at the rabbi, then at Yussie. Yussie cowered, but the rabbi did not. Michael Fein stomped back to the rear of the synagogue and slammed the door behind him.

 "Rabbi, I think, maybe, he was angry," Yussie said.

**“Maybe Both o Us Might Be Out on**

**The Street the Day after Tomorrow”**

 "Yussie, I think maybe both of us might be out on the street the day after tomorrow."

 "I'll go inside and apologize for you." Yussie said, trying again to stand up, but the rabbi pulled him back.

 "No, Yussie, this is my day of atonement, too. All year long that man has been disrespectful of my decisions and has tried to bully me around. I told myself I accepted his demands because he is the 'Big Giver' in the synagogue, and I had responsibilities. But that was not true. I was afraid. My sin was putting up with it."

 They were interrupted again by the sound of the back door opening. Once again, Michael Fein appeared and was approaching fast.

 "Well, Yussie, here it comes," Rabbi Levi whispered.

 Michael stood in front of the bench. He looked at the rabbi, then Yussie, and then back at the rabbi.

 The Rabbi took a deep breath. "Yes, Michael?"

 "Could you move over please, Rabbi?" Michael asked.

 The rabbi breathed a sigh of relief as he slid toward Yussie, making room on his right. Michael Fein sat down.

**“Rabbi, I Need Your Help”**

 "Rabbi, I need your help," Michael began.

 "If it is in my power."

 " Michael deliberated a long time before speaking. Finally, he said, "Rabbi, I woke up this morning and thought, here I am. I'm forty-five and I have everything I've always wanted. I have a great career, a great wife and family, a great home in a great neighborhood ... and I have every reason to believe I will have more of the same for the rest of my life."

 "So, dear Michael," the Rabbi said, smiling. "Are you bragging, or complaining?"

 "No, Rabbi, you don't understand. I was confused. I was confused because something still felt missing. Something is missing... it's not enough."

 "What feels missing, Michael?" Rabbi Levi asked, becoming serious again.

 "Rabbi, that was the disturbing part. I didn't know what was missing. I thought about this all day, and it drove me crazy. It wasn't until I saw you tonight at synagogue that I knew."

 "Knew what?"

 "I knew what was missing. I knew that I needed to *do* something... something... something... something that ... Rabbi, this is embarrassing."

 Rabbi Levi waited for Michael to finish while Yussie remained silent.

**“…I Want this Yom Kippur to be Special”**

 "Rabbi, I want this Yom Kippur to be special," Michael Fein continued. "I don't want to just whisper some prayers and beg forgiveness from G‑d. G‑d knows I can sin. I want to show G‑d I can do something... good. Yes, that's it. I want to do something good."

 "What good thing do you want to do, Michael?"

 "That's the problem, Rabbi. I don't know what to do. I have forgotten how to think this way."

 The rabbi studied Michael's face, which was illuminated by the nearby street lamp. He looked over at Yussie, then back to Michael, and he thought to himself: This man's soul is as hungry as the other man's belly.

 The rabbi waited for Michael to continue. When he didn't, the rabbi cleared his throat.

**“Perhaps You Would Like Me to Offer a Suggestion…”**

 "Perhaps you would like me to offer a suggestion, Michael?"

 "Yes, Rabbi. Please."

 "Michael, do you see this man sitting on the other side of me? Yussie is a good man, an honest man, a hard-working man. He lost his job and the day after tomorrow, the marshal is going to put him out on the street because he has no money to pay rent. You are an attorney. You are rich. You know people and you know the law. Maybe you could help this man?"

 Michael Fein studied Yussie, then the rabbi.

 "Nu?" the Rabbi questioned.

 "Okay, Rabbi," Michael agreed.

 Michael still had a puzzled expression on his face, and then broke out into a beautiful smile. He stood up, straightened his suit, and shook the rabbi's hand. Then he turned to Yussie.

 "Yussie, when Yom Kippur is over, I will meet you back here and after the break fast meal, you and I will map out a rescue plan for you."

 "Thank you," Yussie said to Michael. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" Yussie jumped up and before anyone could stop him, he hugged the president of the synagogue.

 Rabbi Levi gently pried Michael from Yussie's arms, and then hugged Yussie. Michael started to walk back to the synagogue, but the rabbi called out to him, "Michael, wait. There is one more thing I would like you to do."

 "Yes?" Michael asked, turning around.

**Escorting Yussie Back into the Synagogue**

 "I want you to escort Yussie back into the synagogue. He is feeling a little light-headed, and I want you to walk alongside him and make sure he is okay."

 Michael nodded his head and grabbed Yussie by the elbow.

 "And I want him to sit next to you, in my seat, where you can keep an eye on him."

 "What?!" Yussie and Michael both said together.

 "That's your seat, Rabbi!" Yussie objected. "I have my own seat, in the back."

 "It wouldn't look right," Michael agreed.

 The Rabbi stomped over to the two men and asserted, "Look, both of you. I need some time alone to prepare my sermon. Could you both just listen to your rabbi, for once, without complaining or arguing or second guessing?"

 Yussie and Michael looked at each other, shrugged, and then left together. When they made their entrance into the synagogue, the rabbi heard the loud whispers of the congregation. The cantor cleared his throat, sounding like a bull horn, and silence ensued.

 Rabbi Levi looked around and smiled.

 Once again, he felt very close to his Creator, and once again, he felt honored to be an emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

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