

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS EMOR 5785

Volume 16, Issue 33 19 Iyar 5785/May 17, 2025

Printed L'illuy nishmas Nechama bas R' Noach, a"h

For a free subscription, please forward your request to keren18@juno.com

Past emails can be found on the website – ShabbosStories.com

Thanking Hashem for the “Seeming” Bad in One’s Life

Adapted from the Thursday Night Lecture of
Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l



Every tzarah (distress) that comes on a person is a besurah tovah; every misfortune is a treasure chest. And to a great extent we do say that; we see it again and again. Like the man whose business was torpedoed.

A true story – a man in my shul. He took a big order from a Stop and Shop store, a chain store. And he didn’t know that this store was already a customer of someone else, someone in the mafia. By accident he took away a customer from the

Italian mafia and so they came the next night and they firebombed his store. He's out of a job now. And he thought he was ruined. He was finished.

But the truth is that the business was breaking his health. His nerves were frayed and his heart was sick – he was sacrificing his life for the store. But now nothing was left so he went out of that business, and he went and got another job; a nine-to-five city job where his health was maintained.

And he had time even to start learning. The man never learned Gemara before but as a result of the firebombing, he finally started learning Gemara. He became a talmid chacham, a shtikel lamdan too.

There are all kinds of ways that misfortunes turn out to be good later in life. What about that beautiful girl who was engaged to a doctor and everybody was so happy? It was sasson v'simchah, the culmination of the dreams of her family, that the daughter should marry a doctor.

And then the engagement was broken. His mother interfered and he called it off. Oh, you could imagine the tragedy in her home. A yelalah went out, an outcry. "Oy yoy yoy!" The family was sitting shivah. They had lost that golden shidduch. But I know that this doctor happened to be a bum. I knew him. He was a very modern man and a bum too and it was going to be trouble for her.

And soon after the broken engagement there came along a wonderful young man, a frumme ben Torah who was making a good living in computers. It was a wonderful match! As a result of the 'tragedy' she was married to somebody else who was ten times as good and they lived happily ever after. She was saved from the doctor by this tragedy for which they were sitting shivah.

Of course, I'm not recommending breaking engagements, but many times in life we see tzaros have a benefit in this world. And looking back we see it was a stroke of good luck, that nothing better could have happened.

From Tragedy to Treasure

I recall a case of a kollel man, a ben Torah, with a beard, a frum young man, and he happened to be in a certain place where gentile boys came and annoyed him outside the door, outside the window. They were banging on the window and disturbing him. This kollel man happened to be a husky fellow and hot tempered, the very strong type, so he ran out with the intention of doing something to them and they fled. And as he was pursuing them, he tripped on the concrete and he fell down and broke both of his arms!

I happened to meet him subsequently – I visited him and both his arms were in casts – and I told him it's a stroke of good luck for him. Because he would have beaten them up and then their big brothers or their fathers would have come. And they might come with a weapon! So, he got off easy, this fellow. The breaking of both arms, that's the way that he was prevented from getting into trouble.

If we study, if we look back, on very many of the misfortunes in our lives, we will see that they were blessings sent to prevent some later misfortune. There was a woman in our kehillah who crashed her car; she had a smash-up and so she had to go to the hospital for a checkup. And the physician discovered there was a lump on her breast and so they quickly made an operation and she's still alive; it's twenty years and she's well.

Now, I don't know if she realizes what a great blessing that crash was. Had it not happened, she would have perhaps postponed until it would have been past the time of healing. If someone had said "Mrs. so and so, what about going for a checkup?" she wouldn't have listened. Had she received a letter or maybe some friend would have told her, "Let's go," so she would have postponed. She never would have found it until it would have been too late. When, Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent her the letter, the tzarah, she responded and she was saved.

Such things happen again and again. These stories are in the thousands only that we're lazy about thinking; we're not accustomed to looking back and seeing how Hakadosh Baruch Hu is rescuing us and helping us.

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5785 email of Toras Avigdor.

In Defense of Her Husband's Screaming Davening

The Saraf of Strelisk zy" a was known for his fiery, enthusiastic tefillos. When he davened, he would scream loudly and vigorously. A guest from Germany once came to stay in the Rebbe's house. In his hometown, the custom was to daven quietly and somberly.

When the Rebbitzen asked him how he liked it in Strelisk, he replied, "Everything is fine and good but there is one thing I don't understand. Why does the Rebbe scream and make so much noise when he davens? Why can't he stand still and pray quietly?"

The Rebbitzen answered, "His heart is burning within him and this causes him to scream."

The guest said, "My heart also burns within me but I still daven quietly."

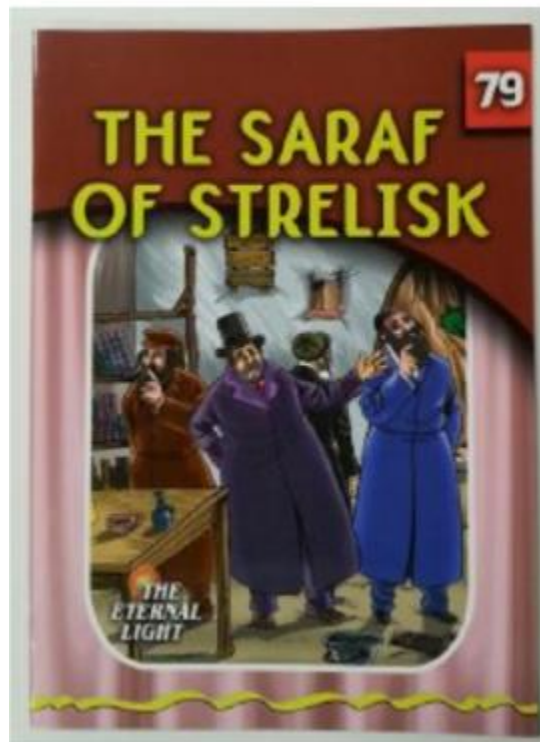
The Rebbitzen stood her ground and maintained her opinion that when someone has a fire burning within them, it is natural to scream. If one does not scream, it is a sign that their heart is cold. The guest would not agree. He continued

to claim that his heart also burned with passion but he manages to keep his composure. Seeing that they would not agree, the Rebbitzin left it at that.

On Friday afternoon, the guest handed his wallet to the Rebbitzin, asking her to put it away for him in a safe place. Right after Havdalah, he asked for his money back but she acted as if she knew nothing about it.

She said, “What money? You never gave me anything.”

Of course, the man disputed her and said that he had given her his wallet to watch over Shabbos but she kept telling him that he must be mistaken, as she did not have his money. Finally, the man lost his patience and he began to scream at her, “Why are you doing this to me?”



She then said to him, “Why are you yelling? Why don’t you speak calmly and quietly?”

He responded, “Because you got me all heated up. I can’t speak calmly when you made me so burning mad.”

She then told him, “Listen to yourself. You just admitted that one can’t be calm and quiet when a fire is burning within him. My husband screams during davening because that is when he is on fire, and you scream about money because that is what gets you fired up.”

She then returned his wallet, having taught him an important lesson.

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5785 email of The Way of Emunah: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum.

It's Not Too Late!

By Aharon Spetner



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

Manny Chopp walked into the Horki Simcha Hall for his Bar Mitzvah. Wow, he had never seen such a beautiful place in his entire life! The golden chandeliers dazzled his eyes and the lush velvet drapery gave the room a luxurious royal atmosphere.

“Check one two, check check,” came the voice of the singer, Hillel Meir, over the PA system as the band set up their equipment.

“Mazel tov, Menachem Mendel.”

Manny turned around in surprise to see none other than the Horki Rebbe himself approaching him.

“Thank you,” Manny said, feeling shy in the presence of the famous tzadik.

“But why is the rebbe here so early? We’re just taking pictures now.”

“And you don’t want me in your pictures?” the rebbe asked, his eyes twinkling.

“Um... no... I mean...” Manny stammered. “I just thought only family members come for pictures.”

“Menachem Mendel,” the rebbe said warmly, putting his arm around Manny. “With the amount of tzedaka and chessed your father and Reb Anshel Holtzbacher do for Klal Yisroel, both of your families are mishpacha to me.”

“Totty,” said Manny after they finished taking pictures and the guests started to arrive. “What are those funny bottles on the tables?”

“Oh those,” said Mordy Chopp, laughing. “Those are seltzer bottles.”

“Seltzer?” said Manny. “I’ve never seen seltzer bottles that look like that before.”

“These are vintage seltzer bottles,” said a man, coming over with his hand outstretched. “Mazel tov! I’m Moshe Manies, the owner of the world’s largest seltzer bottle collection. Some of my bottles are over 200 years old! When your father said your bar mitzvah was coming up, I offered to bring my collection so you could have old-fashioned seltzer on all of the tables. Manies’ Seltzer at Manny’s Bar Mitzvah has quite the ring to it!”

The bar mitzvah seudah was quite the festive affair, as the guests enjoyed the scrumptious food. Everyone, especially the children, had a particularly fun time squirting seltzer into their glasses from the fancy dispenser at the top of the seltzer bottles.

As the evening came to an end, Mr. Manies approached Manny.

“Mazel tov again,” he said. “This was the most beautiful bar mitzvah I’ve ever attended.”

“Thank you for coming,” said Manny. “And thanks for bringing the seltzer!”

“You said a beautiful pshetel,” Mr. Manies said. “But why did you talk about bris milah? Usually, the bar mitzvah bochur talks about something more relevant, like tefillin or something.”

“Well today I also celebrated my bris,” Manny said.

“What???” asked Mr. Manies, shocked. “Your bris was thirteen years ago! I was there!”

“Yes, it was,” said Manny. “But I didn’t have much choice in the matter back then, did I? I was a little baby. But today, I became a bar mitzvah. I am now chayev in mitzvos.”

“So, you had another bris?” Mr. Manies asked, thoroughly confused.

“No, no,” laughed Manny. “But today is when I chose to be happy about the fact that my father entered me into the bris of Avraham Avinu. I couldn’t choose whether or not to have a bris thirteen years ago. But today, as a bar mitzvah, I got to make the choice that I’m glad I had a bris.”

“It works like that?” asked Mr. Manies.

“Absolutely it does,” said the Horki Rebbe, turning to join the conversation. “And it’s something we can do every day. Sometimes we unfortunately might do a mitzvah without proper kavana. But it’s not too late! We can look back and say ‘ah - I’m so glad I did that mitzvah!’ and get schar as if we did the mitzvah with the proper intentions!”

Mr. Manies thought this over.

“You know,” he said. “Last week I only had a ten-dollar bill and I needed change for the bus. There was a poor Yid collecting money by the bus stop, but he only had a few coins. So, I traded my ten-dollar bill for his coins and told him to keep the change. I didn’t really have a choice - I needed to catch the bus or I would miss the New York Seltzer Convention. But what the rebbe is saying means that I can still decide now that I’m glad I gave the man tzedakah and I’ll get schar for doing the mitzvah with the proper intentions?”

“Of course!” said the rebbe. “Ah, yet another choshuve baal tzedakah is here tonight! Mr. Manies, I am proud to consider you part of my family as well!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Reprinted from the Toras Avigdor Junion based on the Torah teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.

In Defense of a Jewish Thief

By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

In the town of Pshemishl, Poland there lived a Yid who owned a large mill. He had a lot of Yiddish workers. It happened that the owner caught one of his workers stealing some flour and taking it home. He immediately fired the worker. The worker had to take care of small children, and needed the job to support them. The worker was at a loss at what to do. So he ran to the community leader of Pshemishl, Reb Shmuel, and begged him to speak to the miller and try and get him his job back.

“How can you ask this of me?” the miller asked Reb Shmuel when he asked him to take the worker back. “You expect me to keep a thief in my mill?”

“Sit down,” said Reb Shmuel to the miller. “Let me tell you a story.

“In the city of Brod, where the Gaon Reb Efrayim Zalman Margolies, was the Rav, a Yid had a large, reputable store. He had an assistant that helped him run the store.

“One day the assistant saw an item he felt he had to have. He couldn’t control himself, and he stole it, and the boss fired him for it.

“Prestigious people of the town begged the boss to have mery on his assistant. They begged the boss to take him back and reinstate him in his job, and they guaranteed that he would never steal again. After all, a person is only human, sometimes he fails. Hashem often forgives people. The boss gave in to them and reinstated him in his job.

“Some time passed, and the assistant once again felt the urge for something he wanted. He came up with excuses, to steal it from the store. And once again, the boss caught him at it. This time he dismissed him forever. No excuses, or explanations, or pleas would work. The assistant was once more without a livelihood, and without bread for his children.

He was an intelligent man, and came up with an idea. He went to the gaon Reb Efrayim Zalman, and told him, “My boss, needs you.”

“The Rav wondered Why would this rich man send for him? If he needed him, he would normally have come to him. But he was not concerned with his own honor, and with his own assistant went to the rich man’s house.

“When the rich man saw the Rav come to his house he sprang up with joy and welcomed him. He took the Rav in and honored him in the nicest way possible. They sat down at the table across from each other.

“The rich man waited to hear what important matter brought the Rav to his house. The Rav, meanwhile, sat and waited to hear on what important matter the rich man had called for him to come to his house. Neither one had an glimmer of what brought the two of them together!

“Finally, the rich man asked the Rav, “Few people have been found worthy of receiving such an honor. I would like to know what important cause brought the Rav here?”

“What do you mean?” asked the Rav. He was bewildered. ‘Your assistant came and invited me in your name to visit your house. Even though I was surprised, I nevertheless answered your invitation and came to you. And now you ask me why I came to you?’

‘What?’ shouted the rich man. ‘Who could it be? What assistant had the nerve to come up with such a lie?’

“After a short investigation he realized that they were talking about the assistant he had fired. The rich man’s anger boiled over, and immediately had someone call the man to his house. As soon as he arrived, the rich man, in front of the Rav, began to condemn the former assistant,

“The assistant, answered, ‘Calm down. I did not lie, and I never called the Rav to your home. My words to the Rav were:

“My boss needs you.” What I meant was that if my boss is looking for such an honest worker who does only good, and never touches anyone else’s money, he won’t find an assistant like that unless he takes a Rav, who is above such things. An honest worker is one of the great qualities praised by Dovid Hamelech. That’s the kind of person he needs to have. But besides the Rav, he won’t find anyone better than me.’

“The Rav smiled at the assistant’s ingenuity, since he had no other choice. He was in severe danger, having lost his means of supporting his family. The Rav asked the boss to give the assistant back his job.

“He then turned to the assistant and said, ‘I demand from you, however, that from now on you act with all the possible honesty at work. I want people to be able to say about you that you represent the quality praised by Dovid Hamelech. The man repented, and never stole anything again.

“Let’s apply the same to you,” finished Reb Shmuel, the community leader of Pshemishl. “To find a honest worker is not easy. So, let’s make the same agreement with your worker, and let him keep his job.”

The boss agreed, and allowed the Yid to return to work, and he became one of the most honest and loyal workers of the miller of Pshemishl.

Reprinted on the Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5785 email of Pardes Yehuda.

Radio Waves

By Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn



Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz and Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky

In 1929, R’ Boruch Ber Leibowitz, the *Rosh Yeshivah* of the Kamenitzer Yeshivah in Poland, and his son-in-law, R’ Reuven Grozovsky, came to America to raise funds for their yeshivah. Among the cities they were to visit was Baltimore,

where they were to be met by R' Koppel Wolpert, a former student of R' Boruch Ber's from when he had still been teaching in Slobodka.

The former student was ecstatic that his revered Rebbe would be visiting his city. Mr. Wolpert, already married at the time, made sure that his home was tidy for the special guests, and on the day of R' Boruch Ber and R' Reuven's arrival, R' Koppel went to the train station to greet them.

He brought the Rabbis to his home, made them comfortable and offered them something to eat. R' Boruch Ber and Mr. Wolpert got into a conversation, and as they were talking, they walked into the living room where Mrs. Wolpert had turned on the radio and was listening to an afternoon program. As Mr. Wolpert came into the room, he shut the radio so that he could hear what R' Boruch Ber was saying.

When he turned to continue his conversation, he saw that R' Boruch Ber had left the room and seemed very disturbed. Mr. Wolpert walked towards his Rebbe, and R' Boruch Ber said to him in a hushed but strong manner, "Koppel! What has become of you?"

The young man didn't understand what his Rebbe wanted. Perhaps he had seen something in the living room which he didn't like? "Oy!" R' Boruch Ber said. "Is that how you were trained in Slobodka?"

R' Boruch Ber was getting more perturbed with each passing moment, and soon he motioned for R' Reuven to go out onto the terrace with him. Mr. Wolpert tried to apologize for whatever it might have been that was bothering his Rebbe, but it was to no avail. R' Boruch Ber and R' Reuven spoke privately for a few moments, and then R' Boruch Ber announced, "Koppel, we cannot stay in your home any longer."

The young man was flabbergasted. What had gone wrong?

R' Boruch Ber finally explained. "How could you have done that in front of me? How could you have shut off that radio when, just moments before, your wife had turned it on? How could you have been so insensitive? You embarrassed her in front of me. Now every time she sees me, she will feel humiliated! How can I stay here another moment if I will cause her to feel uncomfortable?"

R' Koppel was astounded. His Rebbe continued. "Unless you go in and apologize, R' Reuven and I will have to pick up and leave right now."

Mr. Wolpert says that he did go in and apologize, and the two Rabbis indeed stayed that afternoon. Now, close to sixty years later, the incredible concern for another person's feelings that was shown by his Rebbe still remains vivid in his mind.

Reprinted from the Tazria-Mesora 5785 email of Rabbi David Bibi's Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace. (Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – "Around the Maggid's Table")

How to Deal with the Satan

Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman, zt"l, was once walking with a former student, Rav Mordechai Yoffe, who grew up in Baltimore and had spent six years learning in the Yeshivos of Lomza, Mir, and Kamenetz. As it became apparent that war was imminent, Rav Mordechai returned to America in 1938, and settled in New York, where he decided that it was time to get married. However, he wanted a wife that would encourage him to learn, and that was hard to find in those days.

As they walked, Rav Yaakov Yosef realized that Rav Mordechai was very discouraged, and said, "Let me tell you a story. There was a rich Jew in Warsaw, who had a very profitable business. When he passed away, his son inherited the business. Though the son followed the same procedures as his father, he did not meet with success, and after some time, the business was close to failure.

"It was then that the son sought the advice of his Rebbe. The Rebbe listened carefully to the son's discouraging tale and asked him, 'Tell me, what did your father do when there were no customers in the store?'

The son answered, 'Whenever my father had a moment to spare, he became engrossed in Torah study, or he recited Tehilim.' The Rebbe continued, 'And what do you do when the store is empty?' to which the son replied, 'Oh, I'm not like my father! I read a newspaper or talk to a neighbor.'

The Rebbe nodded and said, 'Now I have the answer. When the Satan saw your father busy learning Torah or reciting Tehilim, he was troubled. He therefore sent many customers to make sure that your father should not occupy himself with Torah! Of course, the business flourished! In your case, the Satan is quite content when no customers appear, as you are busy with mundane activities.'"

Rav Yaakov Yosef continued, "Reb Mordechai, you also are pleasing the Satan. He notices that you cannot concentrate on your Torah studies and he keeps you occupied trying to find your Shidduch, but he does all in his power not to allow her to reach you. Start learning Torah again in earnest, and the Satan will see to it that your partner will put in her appearance very quickly."

Rav Mordechai listened to his Rebbe's advice and once again became dedicated to his Torah learning. Not long after that, he met his wife, Chana. Rav Mordechai later said that he followed this excellent advice through many different phases of his life, and it has always proved to be correct! Rav Mordechai Yoffe and his wife brought up a generation of Bnei Torah, and he became the Rosh Yeshivah of Beis Torah in Monsey, New York!

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah

Bugged Out!!!

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein shared a story. One of the supporters of the Baranovitch Yeshivah was a man called Reb Cheikel. Besides assisting them with their needs, every morning, he would go to the local bakeries to get bread for the Yeshivah boys.

As he approached the bakers, he had a special practice to sing for them while he requested their generous donations. When he had a substantial amount of bread, he would return to his home with it, as his house also doubled as the Yeshivah's dining room, and the boys would eat their breakfast there.



Rav Elchanan Wasserman

After breakfast was done, he would then make his rounds to the butchers and ask them for any leftover meat he could have to help feed the Yeshivah boys for supper. For a long time, his efforts successfully kept the boys well nourished.

Rav Elchanan Wasserman, the Rosh Yeshivah, had great admiration for Reb Cheikel and for his dedication. One day, Rav Elchanan called him over and asked him if he had any request that he could fulfill in return for all that he does on behalf of the Yeshivah.

Reb Cheikel responded that he never intended that the Rosh Yeshivah would grant him something in return for his work. But, if he was offering, he had one

request: “Once a week, I ask that your Shiur be given to the Bachurim in my house. I may not understand what you will be learning, but at least there could be learning in my home.”

This wasn't such a difficult request to fulfill, since his home already served as the dining room for the older boys. Out of his Ha'karas Ha'tov, Rav Elchanan approved his request and set up his weekly Shiur in Reb Cheikel's home. Reb Cheikel listened diligently to Rav Elchanan's Shiur, even though he didn't understand any of it.

Reb Cheikel's dining room was a very special place, and it soon became known throughout Baranovich that no bug could be found in Reb Cheikel's dining room. Though there were plenty of bugs swarming around the adjacent rooms, they stood immobile at the entrance to his dining room. Many people from the town came to observe this miracle, amazed at how the bugs didn't enter the dining room, despite the great amount of food that sat around in it.

When Rav Elchanan was asked to explain what was happening in the home of Reb Cheikel, all he said was that he hoped that in Olam Haba, they would give him an opportunity to gaze at the portion of S'char (spiritual reward) that was awaiting Reb Cheikel.

One time, someone named Reb Bornstein was analyzing the scene. Looking on with him was a Mr. Dreazen, someone who was known to be an Apikores, one who sought to disprove Yiddishkeit. This man didn't even come to Shul on Yom Kippur, and here he was, trying to disprove an open miracle. Mr. Dreazen told Reb Bornstein that the bugs not entering Reb Cheikel's dining room isn't proof of anything.

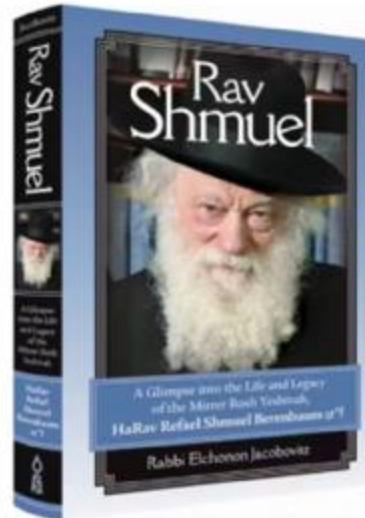
“Look here,” he said, and he took several bugs in his hand to try and bring them into the dining room. Yet, despite his brazenness, the bugs miraculously wouldn't go in. With all his force, he was unable to get them to go in. Several times he tried to disprove the miracle, but it was to no avail. The bugs just wouldn't enter the Yeshivah's dining room.

A few days passed, and the news hit the Yeshivah that Mr. Dreazen had returned to Yiddishkeit, and he was now becoming observant. Mr. Dreazen explained that when he saw what Hashem was doing for Reb Chaikel, despite his limited knowledge in Torah learning, he understood the great power that lies in learning. And although he wasn't the greatest Talmid Chacham, nevertheless, he was doing the best he could with what Hashem had given him, and this gave him the courage to start a fresh commitment to serving Hashem!

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah

The Value of the Afternoon Seder

By Yoni Schwartz



The son of Rabbi Shmuel Berenbaum, ZT”L, went around collecting money for a night Kollel. When he arrived at a certain house, the homeowner asked him, “How much is the afternoon learning seder in Yeshiva worth to your father?”

He said, “I don’t know exactly, but I’ll tell you a story. When my sister was getting married, the wedding was going to be held in a distant venue. My father asked her, ‘How much more would it cost to have it in a closer venue? I don’t want to miss afternoon seder.’ She responded, ‘\$5,000.’ He then gave her \$5,000 to avoid missing afternoon seder. So, I’m assuming it’s worth at least that much to him.”

The man then wrote a check for \$5,000, an unusually large sum. When the Rav’s son opened the envelope in his car and saw this huge check, he went back confused and politely asked for an explanation. The homeowner said, “Now I have a story for you.” “Years ago,” he said, “there was a very sick girl in the hospital.

As Rav Shmuel was there on another visit, the girl’s parents heard the tzaddik was close by, went over and asked him to give their daughter a brachah, which he did. Afterward, she nervously said, ‘I’m worried that I won’t survive and that my disease will turn shidduchim away from me. Can you please assure me that all will be okay and one day I’ll get married?’

He said, ‘I guarantee.’ The family asked, ‘How can you guarantee?’ He said, ‘I just know. In the merit of the Sages Abaye and Rava, it’s going to work.’”

“This girl,” the homeowner added, “is my wife. When we got married, your father drove a long way, missing afternoon seder to be at our wedding.”

Reprinted from the Parshas Pekudei 5785 email of Torah Sweets.