

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI 5784

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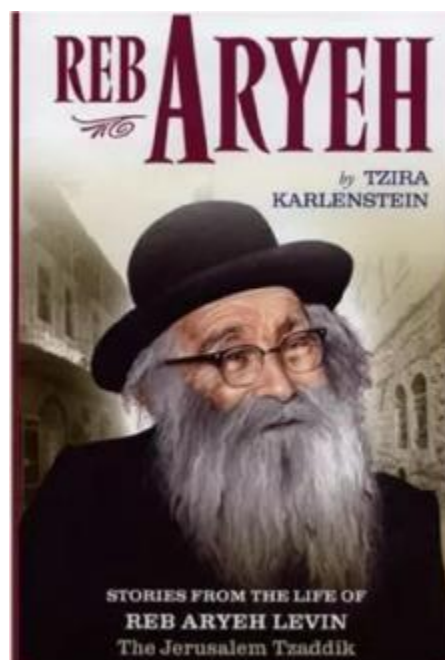
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In Honor of Shabbos

By Tzira Karlenstein



It was a scorching hot Friday afternoon in Yerushalayim. Dressed in his Shabbos clothing, the *tzaddik*, R' Aryeh Levin, was busy walking by all the shops, urging the shopkeepers to close up in time for Shabbos. R' Aryeh spotted a very long line of customers snaking around the corner in front of the ice cream shop.

The owner seemed to have no intention of closing up anytime soon. The hot weather was highly conducive for his booming Friday afternoon business. It was already candlelighting time, and R' Aryeh walked quickly towards the ice cream shop. He understood that it would be very difficult for the owner to pull himself away from the numerous customers. But Shabbos was Shabbos...

R' Aryeh weaved his way through the crowd until he reached the front of the store. He strode into the store, sat down on a stool and placed his *shtreimel* on the table. The owner understood why this rabbi had entered his store; R' Aryeh was a familiar figure from his weekly pre-Shabbos rounds. The owner looked at the surge of customers. He was not going to lose out on business like this, he decided. It was not every day that he could sell his entire stock in less than an hour.

“Still, Shabbos is Shabbos...”

Then he heard R' Aryeh's soft words: “What can I tell you? You are facing a very hard test. Still, Shabbos is Shabbos...”

R' Aryeh then got up slowly, put the *shtreimel* on his head, and shook the hand of the owner like an old friend. Then he hurried out of the store. After R' Aryeh walked quite a distance, he glanced behind him. The line had dispersed, and people were walking off in all directions. The owner was shooing the last of the crowd away and locking up his shop.

R' Aryeh breathed deeply and shook his head, “I envy that shopkeeper,” he thought to himself. “He succeeded in passing a difficult test.”

“...You Were Feeling the Pain of the Holy Shabbos”

A few years later, the store owner met R' Aryeh and told him, “I will never forget the words you said to me that Friday afternoon. You felt that I was facing a very hard test. You understood what I was going through. The words ‘Shabbos is Shabbos’ that you whispered to me penetrated my heart. I felt that you were feeling the pain of the holy Shabbos. At that moment, I made up mind that I would not cause a Jew like you pain. I immediately locked up my store.”

R' Aryeh grabbed his arm and said, “If only there were more like you within the Jewish people!” (excerpted from the Feldheim book - “Reb Aryeh”)

Reprinted from the Parshas Balak 5784 email of The Weekly Vort.

Tested by the Satan

One time there was a Poritz who needed to flee his hometown on very short notice. He approached Reb Yosef, a local Jew, and offered to sell him the entire village at a very low price. Reb Yosef did not have anywhere near the sum the Poritz was asking for, but he recognized that this was a tremendous opportunity, and he didn't want to miss out on it. He sold many of his possessions and took loans from various people, and he was able to put the funds together.

Reb Yosef then took all the money and made his way to the Poritz's house. As he was walking, he saw a woman sobbing bitterly on the side of the road. He approached her and asked what was bothering her, and she explained that she had just lost her husband. She had small children at home and no means to provide for them, and she didn't know what she was going to do.

Reb Yosef Gave Her All the Money He Had Collected

Overcome with mercy, Reb Yosef gave her all the money he had collected, and told her that she should use it to raise her children in comfort. He then went back home and gave up on the offer to buy the village. When Shamayim (Heaven) saw what Reb Yosef did, it caused a great tumult. Here was a man who had sacrificed a future of great wealth and honor to help a fellow Yid!

Reb Yosef and his wife did not have children yet, and because of the great Mitzvah Reb Yosef did, making the sad situation of an Almanah much brighter, the Heavenly Court decided that he and his wife would have a son who would illuminate the world.

The Satan's Strong Argument

However, the Satan argued strongly against this. He said that Reb Yosef's Mitzvah was just by chance, and he surely regretted his "foolish mistake." After all, look at all the debt he incurred because of it and all the possessions he sold! The Satan said that Reb Yosef needed to be tested before he could be rewarded so nicely.

The Heavenly Court agreed. Soon after, an elderly man appeared to Reb Yosef and told him that he heard about the Mitzvah he did of helping the Almanah and her Yesomim. He said, "I know that you now have a lot of debt because of what you did to help her. I would like to help you back. I would like to offer to purchase this Mitzvah from you, for whatever price you actually gave that woman.

The Promise of a Baby that Became a Great Tzadik

But Reb Yosef refused. He said, "All the gold and silver in the world could not compare in value to this Mitzvah!" The elderly man smiled and then informed him who he actually was, and he gave Reb Yosef a Brachah. He told him that by this time next year, he will have a baby boy. And just as he said, one year later, Reb Yosef and his wife had their baby. This child grew up and eventually became the great Tzadik and Chasidic Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel of Riminov, zt"l!

Reprinted from the Parshas Balak 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.

Saved Without Knowing

By Phyllis LaVietes



Hashem unfolded the day here in Dallas with temperate weather, literally a breath of fresh air. But the forecast looked threatening, especially two days after a massive storm that had caused ongoing power outages and serious property damage. I was one of the fortunate ones to have only minor damage that was easily repaired. So, I was hoping to go out and do some shopping, both for myself and for others who were affected much more by the storm. But I had to wait for a few maintenance men to take care of those repairs first. And then, by the time the last one left, it started to rain heavily again.

The Rain Got Heavier and Heavier

I decided to wait it out and see if it was safe to go out; meantime, I went upstairs and got onto my computer. But the rain got heavier and heavier, and I kept hearing reports of flooded roads. So, reluctantly, I opted not to go out. Instead, I stayed upstairs.

A little before noon, I heard my doorbell ring. I opened the view from my front door camera to see who was there; a woman was there in the rain, looking agitated, but by the time I got downstairs to open the door, she was gone. I thought, maybe she was selling something; but why would she be out there in that rain? So, I went back upstairs.

The Truck Outside

A few minutes later, I saw on my door camera that there was a fire truck outside, parked in front of the house of my non-Jewish next-door neighbor, Tim.* He had been in trouble with the law before, and I wondered, what now? I heard some indistinct voices, and then the truck drove away.

Several hours later, I found out from a Jewish friend, Rachel,* three houses away from me, what had happened.

My other next-door neighbor, Lisa,* employs a housekeeper. The housekeeper had accidentally backed her truck into the gas line of the next house, two doors away from me, where the Smiths* live. Rachel, who lives next to the Smiths, told me that the woman at my door must have been the housekeeper, trying to warn everyone about the escaping gas.

A Loud Hissing From the Gas Leak

Although Rachel said there was a terrible smell and a loud hissing from the gas leak, and she and her family had had to leave their house for a while in the pelting rain, I had not smelled or heard anything at all.

Fortunately, the problem was quickly taken care of; if not, there could have been a massive explosion! (And fortunately, it wasn't *my* gas line that got hit!) Hashem was saving my property and maybe even my life while I was totally unaware of this miracle.

Hashem is Performing Miracles for Us While We Are Sleeping

How many times does Hashem save us without our even knowing? Most of the time our bodies function, our appliances work, things go smoothly, and we aren't even aware. We could be sleeping while Hashem is performing wonders for us. The pouring rain finally stopped, but I poured out my thanks to Hashem for this great miracle.

**Names changed for privacy.*

Reprinted from last week's website of The Jewish Press

Welcome to California

By Rabbi David Ashear



Rabbi Gindi* had a nephew, his brother's son, who was learning in the Philadelphia Yeshivah. He recommended his friend Yehudah,* whom he had known for five years in yeshivah and whom he held in high esteem, as a *shidduch* for his cousin, Leah* (Rabbi Gindi's daughter).

Nothing was done about it because Yehudah was learning in Eretz Yisroel at the time. Six months later, another nephew, Rebbitzen Gindi's sister's son – who was learning in the same Israeli yeshivah as Yehudah, also suggested him for Leah.

A Boy with Good Middos

Although this boy sounded like the type of son-in-law he wished for – a boy with good *middos* who studied at top-tier yeshivos – Rabbi Gindi was not optimistic that Leah would be set up with him. “A Sephardi boy of such caliber must have a long list of girls waiting for him to become available,” he told his sister-in-law. “Besides, he and his family live in California. How would we even connect with them?”

“Maybe their community will invite you to speak there and you will make a good impression on Yehuda’s father,” Rebbetzin Gindi’s sister suggested hopefully. The Gindis smiled indulgently. “That’s highly unlikely to happen,” Rebbetzin Gindi said. “My husband is rarely invited to speak out of state.”

He was Amazed!

Exactly one week later, Rabbi Gindi was called by the secretary of that very shul in California, asking if he would be interested in participating in a guest lecture series! He was amazed! Out of thousands of shuls across the world, he was invited to speak at the specific shul where Yehudah’s father davened!

Rabbi Gindi accepted the offer and flew to California. After his speech, he was introduced to the sponsor of the evening – who was none other than Yehudah’s father! Their meeting went very well.

How did Yehudah come to learn in the Philadelphia Yeshivah? It was uncommon for students from his community to attend out-of-town yeshivah high schools, let alone one located across the continent! Several years earlier, a young man from Brooklyn who loved learning Torah ran out of funds and was going to have to leave kollel. He found out about a Lakewood kollel opening in California that was willing to pay him what he needed to continue learning. He moved his family there to continue his studies.

Yehudah and His Father

The first year he taught in the local shul’s night program. The two students he was assigned were Yehudah, who was in eighth grade, and his father. The rabbi learned with them for the entire year, during which he often mentioned and spoke highly of the yeshivah he attended in his youth, the Philadelphia Yeshivah.

By the end of the year, both father and son were convinced that Yehudah should go there for high school. That is how Hashem brought Yehudah up to the level he needed to be on to marry Leah, whose father wanted a young man from a top yeshiva for his daughter. And this is how Hashem introduced Yehudah’s father to this special rabbi, by bringing him all the way to California to speak. (Living Emunah on Shidduchim)

Reprinted from the Parshas Balak 5784 email of The Weekly Vort

It is All From Hashem



The following story is from the Torah Wellsprings, and it happened with the rebbetzin of Reb Chaim Sarna zt'l at the beginning of the Holocaust, when she was still a young girl. When the Holocaust began, whoever could escape did so, and this young girl tried to save her life by running into the forest.

She came to a large field, and from the distance, she saw a large, beautiful house. She was very happy. The house was far from the city, and it might be safe for her to hide there. She hoped that the people in this home would take pity on her and save her. With her final strength, she rushed through the courtyard, arrived at the house, and knocked at the door, shouting, "Good people, save me! Save me!"

The appearance of the man who opened the door frightened her. The man wasn't wearing an army uniform, but his mustache was styled like those of the Nazis. This man was the Nazi commander in that area, and the girl immediately realized the trouble she had fallen into. The man laughed a rolling laugh as he shouted, "A Jew!"

She almost fainted and had to hold onto the doorpost for support. He said to her, "Foolish Jew. You ran all this way to fall in my hands... I can kill you in a moment." But suddenly, he became serious and said, "Tell me, young girl, how did you get to my door?"

She showed him the path she took to reach his home. It was through the field, at the edge of the forest, and then through the courtyard. The man said, bewildered, "I have many dogs guarding my home. Why didn't they attack you? How did you pass them and remain alive?"

The girl looked back and saw tens of dogs. All of them had murderous teeth. She hadn't noticed them earlier. She wouldn't have risked passing through the courtyard if she had seen them earlier. But the fact is that she did pass this courtyard, and she was alive and well!

The man thought that perhaps she had mystical strengths, maybe witchcraft. He told her, "Look, today you can sleep here. But tomorrow morning, I will send you out of here, and obviously, you will need to pass through the courtyard where I keep my dogs. And then I will see. If the dogs do their job... nothing will remain of you. But if you survive, I will know that you are protected from above, and then I give you my word that I will take care of you until the end of the war."

The rebbetzin said, "Don't ask how I passed that night because the night didn't pass! I cried and prayed the entire night, knowing what awaited me in the morning. I saw in my imagination hungry dogs eating me alive, ripping me to pieces. When it was daybreak, I prayed to Hashem, "Save me, Hashem. Please, Hashem, I am a young girl. I place my life in Your hands; please save me."

The wicked person sent her out into the courtyard. She walked calmly; she didn't rush. She wasn't afraid. She focused on reminding herself that there is no one in the world other than Hashem. Hashem was with her, and the dogs didn't touch her. They didn't even bark. The man, who was a high-ranking Nazi officer, witnessed the miracle and had no choice but to keep his promise. He protected her until the end of the war.

This story teaches us that even wild animals can't cause harm, if Hashem didn't decree it. This isn't solely with regards to dogs. It also applies to dogs who appear like humans. No one can harm you unless Hashem commands so. "When Hashem accepts a person's ways, He will cause even his enemies to make peace with him." As in this story, the cruel Nazi saved this girl and protected her throughout the war. She was saved because of her emunah and because of her tefillot. Tefillah can turn everything around and save a person's life.

Reprinted from the Parashat Pinchat 5784 email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.

Story #1389

The Tzadik that Slapped a Donkey

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles
editor@kabbalaonline.com



When I was seventeen years old, in spite of my diligent study in the Porat Yosef *yeshiva*, I enjoyed playing football [1] in my free time. When my grandfather [the **Chacham Menachem Menashe**] would leave on Shabbat morning to speak in different *shuls* (synagogues) till late in the day, I would have time to play ball with a boy who lived in the neighborhood. I always made sure to end the game before my grandfather was expected to come home. I didn't want him to find out about it.

Questioned by His Grandfather About Playing Ball on Shabbat

One Shabbat I was late and my grandfather saw me playing in the square of the neighborhood of Beit Yisrael next to the *shtiblach* (the building with small synagogues). He stopped, called me over and asked what was the meaning of my playing ball on Shabbat!

I was embarrassed; I loved my grandfather. For me he was a 'golden man' with a kind heart and a very generous hand. There wasn't anything I asked him for that he wouldn't do for me right away. Of course, I quickly let go of the ball and followed him home.

On Thursday of that week my grandfather turned to me with a request.

"Do me a favor, take this letter and bring it to **Chacham Rabbi Yehuda-Leon Patilon** who lives in Yafo. It is very important to me that I receive an answer."

Chacham Patilon was a painter who then lived in Yafo on Eliezer Street, next to Shabsi Street. Both my grandfather and my father *obm* [2] were very close to him and aware of his high spiritual level. In certain families of Turkish descent, he was regarded as a hidden *tzadik* (righteous person). They went to him to get blessings and advice.

The Letter was Written in Turkish

He looked like a very simple person, so I wasn't impressed by him, but my grandfather asked of me to go, so I took the letter and went.

The letter was written in Turkish in order that I shouldn't understand. Still, I knew just enough to get the gist. In short, what it said was "My grandson is going in the wrong direction, please take care of him."

The trip from Jerusalem to Yaffo took about two hours. Because of the rocks on the road as a result of the work being done to widen it, I only reached his house at two thirty in the afternoon.

He was sitting on the couch wearing a cap, with a week-old beard. I told him "My grandfather sent you a letter, he is waiting for an answer."

He took the letter, looked at it and said, "Come, sit next to me."

After I sat down he started telling me stories about reincarnation. For example, he told me the following story.

The Neighbor Who Shave with a Blade

"In Turkey I had a neighbor who shaved with a blade. I always pointed out to him that shaving with a blade is against Jewish law, but he would laugh at me.

"Years passed and I immigrated to Israel. One day I was walking in Allenby Street in Tel Aviv, when suddenly I noticed that a donkey had got away from his owner and was running in my direction. When the donkey reached me, it spoke! It said, "Listen, I am your neighbor from Turkey, please give me a rectification!"

"In front of all the people who had gathered around us I gave him a slap. 'I will not give you a rectification,' I announced. "Suffer the rectification you go through now!' [3]

He continued to tell me stories about all kinds of reincarnations. His tales took me away from reality into the past of a totally different world.

Regretfully, being young and a bit lighthearted at that age, I didn't believe him. His stories went in one ear and out the other -- I didn't take them seriously.

He noticed but continued to spin his tales.

Suddenly a cat entered the room. I wasn't surprised. When I arrived, I had noticed a big yard with geese, chickens and cats. Since it was a one floor house, the entrance of cats was natural.

Telling the Cat to Come Back in a Half Hour

The cat started meowing. Turning to the cat, Chacham Leon said, "Go, come back in half an hour." The cat left.

He looked at me and asked: "What time is it?" I told him it was exactly three o'clock.

He again began telling me stories about people who passed away and reincarnations, especially about people who reincarnated in animals.

The cat returned and the Chacham asked me what time it was. It was exactly three thirty.

"You see" he said, "she came back after half an hour. Give me a few minutes with her."

She stood in front of him on her hind paws, looking directly at his face and meowing.

The Cat Seemed to be Having a Conversation

I only heard the meowing. I noticed with amazement that she was moving her head like a person in conversation.

When she stopped meowing, she remained standing there looking at him as if waiting for an answer.

He was so deep in thought, eyes closed, it seemed to me that he was in another place.

After a few minutes that to me seemed like an eternity he opened his eyes and said to her: "Go! Everything is rectified."

The cat turned and left the room.

I asked him in astonishment "You speak to cats?"

A Reincarnation of a 17-Year Old Girl Who Sewed on Shabbat

He answered me as if it was the most natural thing: "No, no. That was a seventeen-year-old girl who was sewing on Shabbat and came to ask for a rectification for the serious sin of desecrating the Shabbat, which is the reason she was reincarnated in a cat.

"I just told you about reincarnations. Well, that was one of them."

"What happened to the cat?" I asked him.

"The cat died. The soul is already above. I see her giving account for other things."

"I don't believe you!" I said and went outside.

In the corner of Shabsi Street, about 200 meters from Chacham Patilon's house, I saw her crushed body on the street, obviously a car had driven over her and killed her. I recognized her from the white stripe on her back. We hadn't heard the screech of sudden brakes or anything like that.

And Chacham Patilon had said that the soul had already left the cat's body.

I returned to his house in shock. He saw my face and smiled. He realized that I had begun to believe. He said, "Tell your grandfather that *everything is all right*."

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*Source:* Adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the translation into English by CRBA of a Hebrew article in “*MESILLOT El HaNefesh*” the weekly publication of **Rabbi Yisrael Abergel**, where he cites the book, “*Tzadikim Nistarim in the Latter Generation*,” vol. 1, p. 168.

*Why This week?* The weekly Torah section this week is called Pinchas, and the beginning is about him, while the Haftorah is all about Eliyahu. That is because, as is widely understood, Eliyahu *Hanavi* (Elijah the Prophet) is considered to be an *incarnation* of Pinchas. [I assume you all noticed right away the very obvious connection also to last week’s reading, Balak. If not, you can ask me; I won’t tattle. J ]

### **Best Known for His Sefer (Book) – “Ahavat Haim”**

*Biographic note:* **Chacham Menachem Menashe** [1892 - 12 Elul, 1968] was born in Turkey. He learned Torah from the sages of Bursa and Istanbul, including Rabbi Shlomo-Eliezer Alfandri. In 1918, he immigrated to the Land of Israel and settled in Jerusalem's Beit Israel neighborhood with his wife and daughter. He earned his living as a blacksmith, but devoted himself to the community, opening a Torah learning and prayer center called Hevrat Ahavat Haim and excelling in righteous deeds and charity. He also authored many works. The best known one is *Ahavat Haim*, which includes sermons, Halachot and tales on the weekly Torah reading portions. He was the father-in-law of Chief Sephardic Rabbi, **Ovadia Yosef**, *zt”l*. [based mainly on *Hyomi.org.il*].

Footnotes:

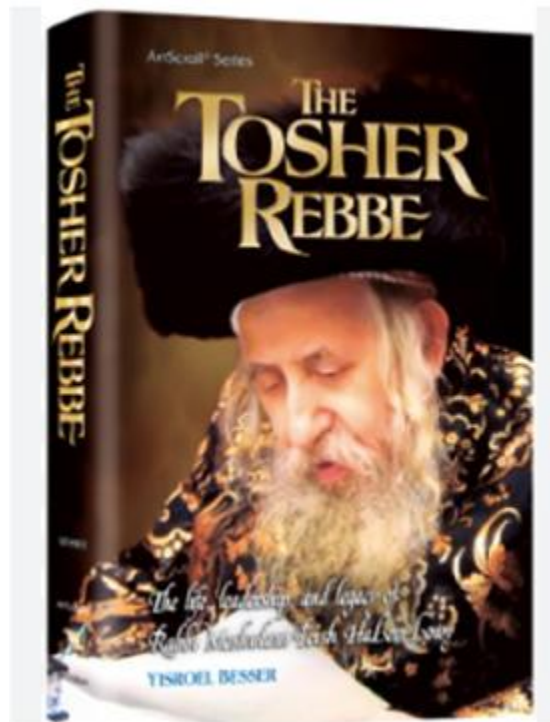
[1]In USA [only] called “soccer”

[2]of blessed memory

[3] (Seemingly, this reaction was to help the soul in some way. - Rabbi Yisrael Abergel)

*Reprinted from the Parashat Pinchat 5784 email of KaballahOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed in Israel.*

# Chaim and the Tosher Rebbe



A man named Chaim lived in Montreal, Canada. Chaim was facing great financial difficulty, and after much consideration, he decided to move to an unknown part of

Canada, where he thought Parnasah would be better for him and his family. When the Tosher Rebbe, zt"l, Rav Meshulam Feish Segal-Lowy, zt"l, heard about Chaim's intentions, he wanted to try and understand his reasons for making such a drastic decision.

## **Overflowing Compassion to His Fellow Yidden**

The Rebbe, who was known for his great compassion to his fellow Yidden, inquired about things like a reliable Minyan, a Mikvah, and a Cheder, in this new city. Regrettably, Chaim admitted that these essential aspects of Jewish life were not going to be there in his new town.

The Rebbe was bothered by this, and he tried to find a deeper reason that Chaim had that was motivating his life-changing decision. With honesty and openness, Chaim told the Rebbe about a heart-breaking incident that had broken his Bitachon and significantly affected his circumstances in life.

During a business trip to Antwerp, he was traveling with a substantial amount of money, and tragically, the money disappeared at the airport. It was somehow stolen, and it left him penniless. He searched everywhere but he couldn't find it. Overwhelmed by despair, he returned to Montreal burdened by the weight of his financial troubles.

### **Offered Financial Assistance to Chaim in Order to Keep from Leaving Montreal**

The Tosher Rebbe was moved by Chaim's story, and he tried very hard to prevent Chaim from leaving. He also offered to assist him with his financial struggles, but Chaim was determined to relocate and start again, no matter what the Rebbe said or offered. Reluctantly, the Rebbe watched as Chaim prepared to depart.

The next day after their talk, a stranger approached Chaim in the street. For some reason, this stranger seemed somewhat familiar, and Chaim said to him, "Do I know you from somewhere? You look familiar."

Chaim's heart skipped when the stranger responded. "I have carried a burden of guilt since that day at the airport," the stranger confessed. Chaim was shocked. The man said, "I couldn't live knowing that I had taken your money. It has bothered me every day since then. Here, please accept it back." And with that, the stranger handed Chaim the exact sum of money that had been stolen years earlier!

### **Overwhelmed by Disbelief and Gratitude**

Chaim was overwhelmed by disbelief and gratitude, and it made a profound impact on him. He abandoned his plan to move away, and Montreal once again became his home where he and his family continued to grow and thrive.

Twenty years later, the sad news spread that the Tosher Rebbe has passed away. As the people gathered around the Rebbe's Kever, Chaim saw the stranger once again. Chaim remarked, "I suppose this is our third time meeting."

However, the stranger humbly corrected him and said, "No, this is not our third time. It is only our second encounter. The truth is that although I told you I stole your money, I did not actually take it. The Tosher Rebbe felt terrible that you were ready to abandon living a Jewish lifestyle, and in his holiness, he gave me that money and asked me to approach you, as if I was the one who stole it."

Tears flowed from Chaim's eyes as he realized the depth of the Tosher Rebbe's wisdom, and his extraordinary act of love!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Pinchas 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U' Tefilah.*