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The Kedushas Tzion and the Dead Non-Jewish Farmer

By Yehuda Klitnick



Rav BenTzion Halberstam, Hy'd, the Kedushas Tzion

The first Bobover Rebbe, was Harav Shlomo Halberstam (1847 –1905), son of Rabbi Mayer Noson (1827-1855), son of the Divrei Chaim of Sanz (1793-1876). Rav Shlomo became an orphan at age eight, and lived with his grandfather, the Divrei Chaim, for most of his early life. Rabbi Ben Tzion Halberstam, (1874 – 1941) author of Kedushas Tzion was the second Rebbe of Bobov and started the Bobover Yeshiva, which was originally situated in the town of Bobov itself.

However, under his guidance, the court grew in numbers, with Chassidishe bachurim flocking to Bobov. Subsequently, as many as sixty branches of the yeshiva under the name Etz Chaim were established throughout Galicia.

During World War II, the Rebbe himself was murdered in the Holocaust, together with his family members and thousands of his followers. A few hundred Chassidim survived, and the Rebbe's son, Harav Shlomo Halberstam (1908 – 2000) took it upon himself to rebuild Bobov.

In the village of Kaminka, located near Kshanov, Chrzanów, in Galicia, a commotion erupted when a farmer named Roman Bielevsky was discovered dead. This incident raised immediate concerns for Mr. Balad, the proprietor of a Jewish inn, who had recently had a confrontation with the farmer. During that altercation, the farmer had assaulted Mr. Balad, subjecting him to severe insults and physical harm.

Although Mr. Balad was innocent, this did not prevent his subsequent imprisonment, and a harsh judgment ahead. Mr. Balad's young son acted swiftly, making his way to Harav Ben Tzion Halberstam, the Kedushas Tzion of Bobov.

There, he confided in the Rebbe, expressing his deep fears for his father's safety, and shedding tears over the grave peril that loomed over him. He also informed the Rebbe that the farmer had three opponents who had long been threatening his life, and he feared that his father would disregard these warnings. It was evident to him that one of these enemies might be responsible for the farmer's demise, but he was uncertain how to prove this.

The Rebbe contemplated the situation and instructed the boy to return home promptly, ensuring he arrived before the farmer's body was buried. He advised the boy to approach the police and request that they delay the burial, as he had a method, provided by the Rebbe, to ascertain the identity of the farmer's killer.

The police held the Rebbe in high regard, and they quickly summoned the police investigator to discuss the Rebbe's suggestion. The boy relayed that the Rebbe proposed that, given the existence of three potential suspects, the police should bring the deceased farmer to the courthouse. The police should also summon his father along with the three enemies of the deceased, asking each of them to extend their hand towards the farmer's body. The individual who withdrew his hand peacefully would not be the murderer, while the one whose hand remained extended would be indicated as the killer!

Due to the esteemed reputation of the Rebbe throughout Galicia, and his considerable influence across various societal levels, including among non-Jews, the investigating judge, following a brief consultation with the police, accepted the Rebbe's proposal.

The body was transferred to the courthouse, and presented to the four individuals, with an order that everyone must shake the hand of the deceased. Whoever is able to return the hand peacefully, signifies their innocence, while failure to do so indicates guilt as the murderer. Everyone expressed their readiness to participate.

When asked who would like to be the first, Mr. Balad proclaimed his innocence, extended his hand, shook the hand of the deceased, and safely withdrew it. However, when it was the turn of the third adversary, Mr. Joseph Falnik, to shake the hand of the deceased, he began to tremble and was fearful of doing so.

The police compelled him, and as soon as he grasped the hand of the deceased, he screamed in terror, and immediately confessed to having had a quarrel with the farmer regarding the boundaries of their fields, which had not been resolved, leading him to kill the farmer in a fit of revenge.

An uproar ensued, and the judge admired the wisdom of Bobover Rov for identifying the guilty party and exonerating the innocent. The adversary Mr. Falnik was taken into custody, while the homeowner, Mr. Balad, was released. The story rapidly spread throughout the country.

The Rebbe's wisdom was instrumental in unraveling the murder mystery, and liberating a Jew from the grave danger that loomed over him without any wrongdoing.

The Jewish newspaper Der Isrelit reported on the incident as simple wisdom, but the Chassidim recognized it as a great miracle of Bobover Rov. (Israelit Frankfurt Tammuz 1929 reprinted in the Sefer Arzei Halevanon page 167)

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5786 email of Pardes Yehuda.

Not Such a Simple Brachah

By Rabbi Moshe Hirschberg

The mechaber of Sefer Be'er Shimon on Shas, Reb Shimon Schreiber, shared with me an extraordinary story that recently occurred:

A philanthropist paid a visit to Reb Leibish of P'shvorsk, the revered P'shvorsk Rebbe of Antwerp. After their conversation concluded, the visitor placed before the Rebbe a signed check for one million dollars. (Given the number of individuals and institutions the Rebbe supports, this was a generous yet not unimaginable gesture.)

Eager to express his gratitude, the Rebbe went to retrieve his becher—the very cup from which he had made Kiddush for over forty years—and presented it to the donor. This was not merely a gift; it was a deeply personal statement of appreciation. But the philanthropist, after recognizing its profound significance, respectfully declined the offer.

“What, then, can I offer you to express my deep hakaras ha'tov?” the Rebbe asked.

“If you’re offering,” the philanthropist replied, “I would gladly accept a brachah for simchas ha’chaim. That is something I truly lack—and if you could grant me that, it would be the greatest reciprocation.”

The Rebbe’s eyes closed, and the room fell silent. Moments passed—though they felt much longer—before he finally opened his eyes and said softly, “I’m afraid I cannot assist with that request. You know I would do anything to help. I even offered you my personal becher. But that—that lies beyond my reach.”

The philanthropist was taken aback. “Out of reach? Your brachos are renowned in Shamayim! People travel from all over the world to seek your brachos, and they witness miraculous salvation. How can you say you cannot offer a blessing for something so simple?!”

The Rebbe gently explained, “Simchah is found within the Torah. Through learning and reviewing, one acquires true joy. There are no shortcuts. Beyond guiding you to the path, there is nothing more I can do. The rest is in your hands.”

The donor left deeply moved—surprised, yet grateful—for he had been given the true key to happiness.

True joy is cultivated through the pursuit of Torah learning

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5786 email of Zichu Toras Moshe

Rav Moshe’s Great-Grandfather

When Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt”l, was young, his parents wanted to inspire him to trust in Hashem and serve Him with absolute devotion, and they would tell him a story about his great-grandfather which made a powerful impression on him.

Rav Moshe’s father was named after his own grandfather, Rav Dovid Feinstein, who was a man who worked as a common laborer, but was full of Yiras Shamayim.

When Rav Dovid was hired to work for a non-Jew, he made the condition that every day he must be allowed time off to Daven Minchah. However, Rav Dovid’s employer was not very happy about this condition. He was angry that precious time that could have been used for work would be ‘wasted’ because the Jew had to say his prayers. But Rav Dovid was a good worker and the man needed him, so he agreed.

However, the employer became even angrier when he saw that Rav Dovid’s Shemoneh Esrei was recited carefully and with intense Kavanah, and lasted a very long time. The man said, “Who does he think he is? This is not a synagogue where you can pray as long as you like. I only intended to allow him a couple of minutes off, and nothing more!”

Instead of speaking to Rav Dovid directly, the man decided to send the Jew a message to show how upset he was, and he wanted it to be a message that Rav Dovid would remember for a very long time. One day, as Rav Dovid stood with his eyes closed davening Shemoneh Esrei, his employer moved behind him, and held a shotgun in his hands. He waited for Rav Dovid to bow, because after watching him Daven a few times, he knew that there were times when he would bow his head, and when the moment came when Rav Dovid bowed, he shot his gun just above Rav Dovid, and a bullet whizzed right over him.

The goy watched with joy, expecting to see the Jew fall to the ground from fright or start running like mad for the door, but he was greatly disappointed. Rav Dovid simply continued to daven as if nothing at all had occurred. His Kavanah was so intense that he may not have even heard the gunshot at all!



Rav Moshe Feinstein, the great-grandson of Rav Dovid

Later, the employer told Rav Dovid what he did and that he tried to scare him by showing that he had been angry enough to kill him for taking so long in his prayers, but when he realized how intensely Rav Dovid was concentrating on his prayer, he realized that Rav Dovid was truly a G-d-fearing man. He said, “I see now that you really are not wasting any time at all as you are actually talking with G-d, and I am no longer angry about this. I thought you were trying to fool me just so you can take a break from work.”

From then on, the man would refer to Rav Dovid as ‘my Jew’, and never again complained about the length of his davening. When Rav Dovid davened, it was as clear as day to him that he was standing directly before Hashem!

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5786 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.

Important People

By Aharon Spetner



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

“Wow,” said Shimmy as the Greenbaums arrived at the hotel where Tante Ahuva’s chasuna was being held and a bellhop came over to take their coats.

“Oh. My. Kneidlach.” Basya breathed as they walked into the lobby, which had been decorated with what looked like over ten thousand pearl-white roses.

The smorgasbord was incredible - there were seventeen different types of meatballs, and each type was available with thirty different sauces!

“We’ll need to eat 510 meatballs to see what they all taste like,” said Yitzzy.

“I think I need a bigger plate,” Shimmy said, looking down at the small plate in his hand.

“You don’t need to eat every single thing here,” admonished Cousin Pinny, who had come all the way from Santa Fe, New Mexico. “Just take a few meatballs and enjoy them. There is a whole meal soon and you don’t want to ruin your appetite.”

Shimmy and Yitzzy wisely took Cousin Pinny’s advice and only took five meatballs, three slices of pastrami, and a potato knish. It was a good thing too,

because the next thing they knew, the chosson, their new Uncle Berish was being led down towards the chuppah.

The holy Horki Rebbe, Uncle Berish's uncle, was mesader kiddushin, and everyone present could feel the kedusha mixed with the cool nighttime air.

The glass broke with a loud bang and the music exploded as Uncle Berish and Tante Ahuva were danced away by a group of spirited bochurim.

As the first course of the meal was served, Shimmy and Yitzy took their seats at the cousins' table, next to Donny from Cedarmere and Benji from Woodhurst, who were already engaged in animated conversation.

"I'm going to be a rocket scientist," said Donny. "I already know more about science than anyone in my school. I'm going to get a job designing superluminal spaceships that will take humanity to other galaxies!"

"What?" said Yitzy. That didn't sound right, but who was he to argue with Donny, who knew more about science than anyone in his school?

"I'm going to be a brain surgeon," Benji said. "I'm going to perform regenerative noninvasive prefrontal cortex surgery on the posterior cerebral lobe of the brains of COVID-19 patients."

"Well, I'm going to be a rocket surgeon," said Jonah from Coffeeneck, New Jersey, joining the conversation.

Shimmy and Yitzy laughed.

"No, really," Jonah said seriously. "Long duration spaceflight passengers will need to have surgeons on board - I'm going to be the first surgeon to operate in zero gravity!"

The music started up as Uncle Berish and Tante Ahuva entered the ballroom and everyone got up to dance. But Shimmy and Yitzy lingered in their seats. Suddenly they didn't feel like dancing anymore.

"Shimmy, Yitzy, is everything okay?" asked Totty who had come over to see why they weren't joining the dancing.

Shimmy and Yitzy told Totty about the conversation they just had with their cousins.

"Totty," Shimmy said. "Our cousins are already planning to be such important people - we never really thought much about doing anything like that. But they seem to have it all planned out."

"Kinderlach, do you know about Yaval, Yuval, and Tuval-Kayin?"

"From the end of Parshas Bereishis?" asked Yitzy.

"Correct," said Totty. "They invented tents, musical instruments, and how to make metal tools."

"Wow," Shimmy said. "So, before them people had to live in caves without music and shovels and things like that?"

"Yes," said Totty.

“Wow, they were some really important people,” said Yitzy.

“Tell me, boys,” Totty asked. “What do you want to do when you grow up?”

“We always thought we’d learn in kollel for as long as possible,” said Shimmy.

“And then if we needed parnasah, we would maybe get a job as a rebbe or a rov or something,” Yitzy added, as Shimmy nodded in agreement.

“Beautiful!” Totty said. “Now in Parshas Noach, which of the people I mentioned were saved from the mabul?”

“Uh...” thought Shimmy. “None of them. Only Noach and his children.”

“Exactly!” Totty said. “Hashem didn’t save those so-called important people. He saved the tzadik and his family, regardless of what the rest of the world thought of them. By striving to be the best eved Hashem you can possibly be, you will be more important in Hashem’s eyes than any doctor, lawyer or scientist!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5786 email of Toras Avigdor Junior based on the Torah teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.

The Secret of the Serious Masmid

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz said regarding his Rebbe, Rav Binyamin Rabinovitz, zt”l, that someone once observed him learning and noted he was able to sit and learn for seven hours straight without lifting his eyes from the Gemara even once. This person was very amazed by this, so he built up the courage and asked the Rav where he got his strength from to be able to learn Gemara for so many long hours.

Rav Binyamin answered him, “I also did not think that I would be able to do this, but I said to myself, that I will try to learn as much as I can, and see how long I can go for. I thought, ‘Isn’t learning for just five minutes straight a difficult thing to do?’

“So, I began to accustom myself to learn Gemara for just five minutes straight, without interruption. After I became used to this, I decided to push myself and learn an additional five minutes. Over time, in stages and with small steps, I was able to keep adding to the time I learned until I was eventually able to learn for seven hours without interruption!”

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5786 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.

The Change of Name

By C.B. Weinfeld

Yidel was a good, solid boy — ehrlicher, kind, and sincere. The third son in his family, he followed two brilliant brothers who were considered iluyim. In his circle, boys usually became engaged around nineteen. But Yidel was twenty-one... then twenty-two... and still waiting. His younger sister's classmates were already married. Most of Yidel's friends were too.

But in his parents' home, the phone was silent. A suggestion here or there would appear — and then fizzle out. The family wasn't well connected, didn't have yichus, and their father held a simple job. But they were an exceptional family — refined and deeply frum, with solid hashkafos and warmth.

As time passed, his parents' concern grew heavier. His father decided to take him to Europe, to daven at kivrei tzaddikim. His mother undertook to say Shir HaShirim every day for forty days. They were doing their hishtadlus — but nothing happened. Then, one morning, Yidel came home from shul with a spark of hope. "I met Reb Shulem Gombo*," he said — the famous shadchan known for his success stories. "He said he's thinking of something for me." He gave Mr. Gombo his parent's number.

His mother smiled faintly but didn't expect much. She had heard that before. But this time, the phone did ring. "Mrs. Stein," came the warm voice of Mr. Gombo, "I think I have something truly special. Goldie Reidler*, daughter of the real estate magnate Asher Reidler."

Yidel's mother almost laughed in disbelief. The Reidlers were a name everyone knew — wealthy, prominent, with a daughter who was considered a catch of a lifetime. But Mr. Gombo continued. "You should know, the Reidlers have actually had their eye on Yidel for some time. Their nephew learned with him and couldn't stop praising him. They have dozens of suggestions, some from the best yeshivos, top families — but they're interested in your son. They don't need money; baruch Hashem, they have plenty. There's just one small detail holding them back."

He paused. "Mr. Reidler has a rebbi, a mekubal, who told him clearly: choose Yidel." Yidel's mother chuckled. "So now I need to ask our mekubal if he agrees!" she said jokingly. But Mr. Gombo was completely serious. "From their entire list, the mekubal singled out your Yidel," he said. "But there's one issue — the names. He said that the names 'Yidel' and 'Asher' are not compatible. The solution, he said, is simple: change the boy's name."

"What?!" she burst out. "Are you out of your mind?!"

But the shadchan persisted gently. “The mekubal said to add the name Eliyahu. That’s all. Just a mi shebeirach in shul.” At first, she dismissed the whole thing as absurd. But Mr. Gombo wouldn’t let go. He called again. And again. Finally, Yidel agreed. Quietly, his father went to a small minyan in another neighborhood, where no one knew them, and there they added the name. Yidel became Yehudah Eliyahu.

They immediately called Mr. Gombo to let him know — but he didn’t pick up. They left messages — no response. Two days passed. Finally, Yidel’s mother called from another number. He answered. After a long, uncomfortable pause, Mr. Gombo said, “I’m really sorry... but the Reidlers are looking into another shidduch.” It felt like the air had been knocked out of her. She was furious, hurt, and heartbroken all at once. By that night, the news broke — Goldie Reidler was engaged.

The disappointment was sharp. But Yidel’s mother accepted it with emunah. She told herself that Hashem had a reason, even if she couldn’t see it yet. Months later, another suggestion came — a girl named Zissy Meister*. Her father, Reb Yehudah Meister, hesitated. “We share the same name,” he said. “Yehudah and Yehudah — it’s not going to work.” But when he heard that the boy’s full name was Yehudah Eliyahu, his Rebbe encouraged him to go ahead. The shidduch moved quickly — and ten days before Rosh Hashanah, Yidel became a chosson.

It was then that everything became clear. The previous Rosh Hashanah, the decree had already been sealed — that Yehudah Eliyahu would become engaged before the next Rosh Hashanah. Not Yidel — Yehudah Eliyahu. What had once seemed confusing, even humiliating, was suddenly revealed as a masterpiece of hashgachah pratis. The painful name change, the lost shidduch, the months of silence — all threads in a perfectly beautiful tapestry only Hashem could weave. (Excerpted from the book --“Another Handful of Stars” by C.B. Weinfeld)

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5786 email of The Weekly Vort.

Mordechai And The Mute

By Rabbi Sholom Klass, a”h

While many of us know Mordechai *HaTzaddik* from the story of Purim, he was also one of the *Anshei Knesset HaGedolah* – Men of the Great Assembly. He was a man endowed with heavenly wisdom and vision and he used these gifts to benefit his people and to work for the resurgence of Torah in the dark days immediately following the Babylonian exile and the return to Zion.

When the Jews returned to their homeland they were a poor and weak group of people. Because of the great number of enemies and wild animals that had

inhabited the land during their exile, they huddled together in a few communities such as Jerusalem in order that they might find protection. Thus, vast areas of former farmland were left neglected.

Soon it was time for the cutting of the *omer*. However, to the great dismay of the people, there was not one among the *Kohanim* who knew where a barley field could be found.

Inquiries were made to see if there was anyone who remembered where the barley fields had been.

“Any man who knows where the barley grew, come forward and inform the elders.”

Just as it appeared that no one remembered, a man approached. When he stepped forward he indicated that he was mute, unable to speak.

As the people watched, he approached a little *Sukkah* whose roof was made of sticks. Raising his right hand he pointed to the roof of sticks, and placing his left hand on the sticks he nodded his head as if indicating an answer to those assembled.

The *Kohanim* looked at each other in puzzlement. What did that mean? What was the man trying to tell them?

Mordechai Understands

Mordechai, sitting there with the other elders, also pondered the man’s actions.

“The sticks,” he said to himself, “are called *tzrifin* by the people and the roof *gag*. Perhaps there is some place that was formerly known as Gag Tzrifin?”

Turning to some of the assembled people he asked: “Is there a place that is known as Gag Tzrifin, or some such name?”

“There is a place that was formerly called Gagos Tzrifin,” answered one of the people.

“In that case let us go there and see if barley grows there and if it is the place the mute alluded to.”

Sure enough, when the people arrived they found barley growing and they cut it for the *omer* as they had been commanded.

The Sacred Bread

As *Shavuot* approached, the need for the sacred bread was apparent and once again a problem arose. The bread had to be made from wheat and no one seemed to know where such a field could be found.

Once again, the call went out for someone who knew where the proper field was. And once again, as before, the mute came to impart the information.

This time he stood before the elders and placed one hand over his eyes while putting the other over a hole that had been sealed.

The *Kohanim* were now more puzzled than before. What could this possibly mean?

Once again, Mordechai pondered the meaning of the man's actions.

"He has covered his eyes and a sealed hole. Is there a place in Judea which is known by such a name, perhaps something like Eyn Socher?"

Indeed, there was, the people informed him and when they arrived there, they found the wheat that they sought.

When the people saw Mordechai's wisdom, he became deeply respected and beloved by all the people and they said: "No longer shall he be called Mordechai, but rather *Petachyah*, for the L-rd has opened his eyes and allowed him to see the light of wisdom and Torah.

"In the same way have our eyes opened so that we now know things that we had not known before."

Reprinted from the March 13, 2020 edition of the Jewish Press, The Midrash and Our Gaonim.

The Payback for the Sponsor of the Siyum of Bava Basra

By Rabbi Moshe Hirschberg

Rabbi Zev Dinner knew the effort his participants invested in his Daf Yomi shiur. Day after day, they showed up—attentive, consistent, and deeply devoted to the limud—no matter what that day's events had brought about. When the time came to complete Maseches Bava Basra, he wanted to celebrate in a way that reflected that dedication.

This siyum, he decided, would be special. It wasn't simply ending a single, albeit long mesechta; it was the end of three difficult mesechtos—Bava Kamma, Bava Metzia, and Bava Basra. This siyum was to be a statement—a demonstration of the chashivus of Torah and the greatness of those who commit themselves to it.

He began planning. A hotel hall was booked, reservations were made for all the mishtatfim, and excitement spread quickly through the group. A lavish event was not what people expected from a small shiur of young men in Tiveria. Such extravagance might have been typical of Tel Aviv, but here it was unheard of. Still, Rabbi Dinner's dedication to his shiur and to Torah left no room for compromise. He wanted to do what was right, and he did it without hesitation.

Invitations went out, calling everyone to gather on a crisp Thursday afternoon in the fall.

When Mrs. Miller, a married daughter of one of the shiur's participants, saw the invitation on the countertop of her parent's kitchen, she paused. She knew how much this siyum meant to her father. Almost instinctively, she reached out to Rabbi Dinner with an offer that stunned him: Her family would cover the full cost of the siyum.

Rabbi Dinner was taken aback. He had planned to reach out to others to cover the heavy costs, and now others are reaching out to him—with the entire cost covered just like that!

What Rabbi Dinner didn't know was the story behind her generosity. Mrs. Miller was hoping that by offering such a respectful act in her father's honor, Hashem would in return give her children who would offer her kavod haTorah. "What better thing can I do than support such a shiur to hopefully merit that Hashem will gift me with a child of my own?"

She played no games and spared no expenses. Not only did she cover the hotel costs, but she also arranged elegant supper packages for the wives who couldn't attend. "Just because they can't come," she said, "doesn't mean they shouldn't be part of it." Every family would share in the simchah—whether in the ballroom or at home.

On the 18th of Kislev, the siyum came to life. The hotel ballroom glowed with joy and gratitude. The participants and their families celebrated with heartfelt songs and divrei Torah, while at home, the wives who couldn't attend gathered around their tables, enjoying the same beautiful meals—an uplifting reflection of kavod haTorah reaching across homes and hearts.

That same evening, Mrs. Miller quietly released a silent tefillah: "If only Hashem can give me a child in the zechus of what I did. Everything I did was a big step out of my comfort zone. Please, Hashem, grant me a child."

The siyum, presented with grace and dignity, left a powerful impression on all who attended. Mrs. Miller's father was honored as being the mesayeim.

All the men of the shiur walked away with unparalleled inspiration and continued their learning with deeper focus and greater passion—each one moved by the profound act of kavod haTorah that had made the siyum so extraordinary.

A week before Rosh Hashanah, 5786, the participants received a sequel invitation, though not to another siyum invitation. This invitation was to attend the bris of Mrs. Miller's beautiful baby boy. On the 18th of Elul, she was zocheh to hold a baby of her own, and was inviting all those who participated in the zechus that brought about the yeshua to share with her family's new joy.

Being nine months to the date, Mrs. Miller was sure that Hashem was showing her what brought about the great salvation. Witnessing the brachah that brought it only brought that much more chizuk to the participants.

The greatest brachah is placed in the Torah, and by learning, one receives unparalleled siyata d'Shmaya.

Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5786 email of Zichu Toras Moshe