

The Jewish Weekly

In Loving memory of
Mendy Klein
 ר' מנחם משה ז"ל
 בן ר' נפתלי הירצקא
 נפטר ל"ג בעומר
 י"ח אייר תשע"ח
 ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

Only Three Coins

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Baruch was in trouble. His daughter was twenty five, getting older every day, and he had no dowry to offer a prospective groom. In fact, he, as all the Jews in the area, barely had enough to live on.

And it was all because of the cruel Poritz (Landowner), who not only charged ridiculously high rent, but also regularly imposed bizarre fines and taxes on the Jews, to cover his lavish life style and gambling debts.

To top it all off, one day a matchmaker came up with a good suggestion for his daughter!!

Indeed it was a good suggestion, but all poor Baruch had to offer, were debts! And the 'suggestion' himself, was in the same economic bracket.

With no alternative, Baruch set out by foot, to see the great Tzaddik (holy Jew) Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk [One of the foremost pupils of the Maggid of Mezeritch, the successor of the Baal Shem Tov] for help.

Two days later, he was standing before the Tzaddik humbly pouring out his heart.

The Rebbe told him, that there was nothing to worry about. He then took three ten-kopek coins from his desk drawer, and put them on the table before Baruch, as if to say, 'Here's what you've been waiting for!'

Baruch looked at the coins, and almost began to cry from confusion. It made no sense. Thirty kopeks was close to nothing. There was no possibility that the Rebbe misunderstood what he said. But thirty kopeks? A wedding with one musician costs at least ten thousand kopeks (1000 rubles). What could he possibly do with thirty kopeks?!

But, reminding himself that the Rebbe certainly knew what he was doing, and hoping that the Rebbe didn't notice his dismay, he took the coins as though they were worth millions, forced a smile and a thank you, and tried his best to look grateful, as he backed out of the room.

Treading slowly on the road towards home, he couldn't help thinking negative thoughts. What would he tell his wife and daughter? What would he say to his friends? To the groom? The groom's family? The matchmaker? This was the end - no one can make a wedding with thirty kopeks!

As he was leaving the city boundary, disillusioned and depressed, he heard someone yelling "Stop! Stop!" from behind him.

He turned, and saw one of the Rebbe's chasidim running after him, waving his arms.

'Aha!' he thought to himself. "The Rebbe had been testing me! He wanted to see how I would react. What a fool I was for doubting! For sure he has now sent the rest of the money!" The

chasid arrived, still huffing and puffing as he began to speak.

"The Rebbe sent me to say, that he wants you to give back one of the coins. He said he gave you too much."

Baruch was too stunned to say a word. He mechanically took one of the three coins from his pocket, and handed it over. The chasid put it in his own pocket, and then with a brisk 'Thank you, have a good journey,' hurried back to the city, leaving the perplexed Baruch alone, to resume his trip - ten kopeks poorer.

Now he was even more confused. And he worried that his bad thoughts would slowly drive him insane! But then a famous chasidic saying popped into his mind: "Think good and it will be good."

An hour later, trying to keep positive, he saw up the road, a group of three young ruffians, huddled over a bonfire, off to the side. "Oy!" he thought to himself. "This means trouble."

But this time, instead of cowering as usual, he remembered his resolution, and picturing his Rebbe's face, he stood straight, smiling.

When the gentiles noticed him, they stood up and approached. One of them held up a leather bag. "Hello there, Jew! Want to buy a good purse?"

He shook their hands, took the bag, and had a look. It was truly a fine piece of work, well sewn with golden inlays. He opened it to have a look at the lining, and lo, there was a bunch of notes of large denominations in German currency! He counted. There were twenty! A fortune! The peasant boys must not have had any idea what they were, but he recognized them.

"Sure, you can have the pictures too." They said. "Just give us thirty Kopeks and it's all yours."

Baruch almost fainted! Thirty kopeks? Why that is exactly what the Rebbe had given him...at first! But now, "Oh, no! All I have is twenty!" he thought to himself, and began to get depressed and confused again, as always. But the two coins in his pocket, reminded him to be positive. He remained calm, closed his eyes and prayed for an idea.... And suddenly he had it!"

"Listen fellows. You know what?" he heard himself say confidently, "I don't have enough for the bag. But I'll give you twenty kopeks for the pictures."

The boys looked at each other, trying to hide their glee. What a fool! Twenty kopeks for paper? Now they could sell the purse twice!

They took the coins, shook his hand again, and let him take the paper pictures, while they gladly held on to the purse.

As soon as Baruch was out of their sight, he took out the bills and counted. Twenty bills, each worth the equivalent of five thousand kopeks. He was rich beyond imagining! He and his daughter's marriage were saved. What a miracle!

But when he arrived home, his wife, although overjoyed, reminded him, that he couldn't take the money, until he was sure it was ownerless.

It Once Happened..

So a few days later, he returned to Lizhensk, first to find out if anyone there knew to whom the purse belonged, and if not, to give the Rebbe a big donation, and invite him to his daughter's wedding. But before he reached the Rebbe's house, he felt someone staring at him. He turned to look, and it was one of those gentile boys that had sold him the 'pictures', but now he was bandaged and beaten. Reb Baruch nodded and the boy began to talk.

"Hello again, Jew. You're the one we met with the purse, right? Well you'll never guess what happened. As soon as you left, we got into an argument, about how to divide the coins and the purse - you know, who gets what. Well, somehow the purse fell into the fire, and one corner burned off. So we just left it there to finish burning. Who would buy a singed purse?"

"Then, about five minutes later, this huge wagon comes storming up, from the direction of the city, stops where we are, and who gets out, but that devil the Poritz. He was screaming about his missing purse.

"Well, when he saw the remains there in the fire, he started cursing, jumping around, and screaming at us like a mad man. All for a stupid purse! He began beating us with his cane, and ordered his servants to do the same. What a maniac! For a lousy purse? And he's supposed to be a rich man!"

"Then he jumped into his carriage, and drove back to where he came from. Lucky you, that you didn't buy the purse, and that he didn't continue straight, in your direction. If he would have seen you, he probably would have killed you. He hates you Jews. He almost killed us!"

Suddenly Baruch understood. If he would have had the third ten-kopek coin, to buy the purse, the Poritz would have continued down the road, found him with the purse, and maybe even killed him. Now, it was clear, that the Poritz gave up all hope of recovering the money, thus relinquishing ownership. The money was his to keep!

The twenty kopeks the Rebbe gave Baruch, was just enough money to make him rich, and to keep him safe...and change forever, his attitude about seeming bad luck.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

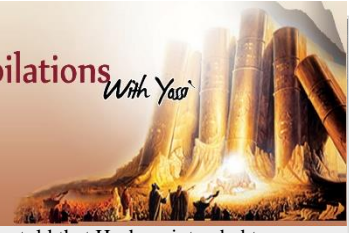
Editor's Note: Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk ז"ל's 233rd Yahrzeit is next Tuesday, 21st Adar – March 17th of this year.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times – Ki Tisa - Parah

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	5:10	6:23	7:03
Tel Aviv	5:25	6:25	
Haifa	5:16	6:24	
Be'er Sheva	5:28	6:26	



The Buckwheat Seller's Secret By Asharon Baltazar

Most of Lublin's residents, lay fast asleep, yet its venerable Rabbi, hardly noticed the time. Rabbi Shlomo Luria, sat in one of the synagogues, immersed in Torah study, his gaze rarely moving from the book in front of him. The absolute silence of the past few hours, was suddenly interrupted by a faint noise. Rabbi Shlomo paused his learning, and listened, trying to place it. Although soft and mellow, he quickly recognized it, as the sound of Torah learning, emanating from the floor below, a thought which caused Rabbi Shlomo to sit up a little straighter.

Under the synagogue, was the small store, where Reb Avraham Kashi sold the townspeople vegetables and buckwheat (kasha), earning him the Kashi moniker. Reb Avraham was known to be a kind, but a simple and almost illiterate Jew, barely able to follow the prayers, or read Tehillim.

Rabbi Shlomo walked over to the open window, where he was able to discern, that it was indeed Reb Avraham's voice, explaining the text with such startling clarity, that the Talmudic complexities unraveled almost effortlessly. For several minutes, Rabbi Shlomo remained transfixed by the window, savoring the fact that unbeknownst to anyone in Lublin, a rare genius was holed up beneath the synagogue.

Soon after morning prayers, Rabbi Shlomo requested that Reb Avraham appear before him. "I called you here because of a difficulty that arose during my studies. I myself failed to find an answer, so I'm hoping you can help me."

"Is this a joke?" frowned Reb Avraham. "It's useless to seek such answers from a simpleton like me."

Rabbi Shlomo tried to convince him to drop the veil of ignorance, but Reb Avraham squirmed, dismissing the suggestion as laughable. But Rabbi Shlomo would not be deterred. He continued to urge, until Reb Avraham hung his head, and agreed to take a look. Rabbi Shlomo slid the Gemara over. After reluctantly skimming through the text, Reb Avraham looked up and offered a novel explanation. Rabbi Shlomo immediately countered it, and the two debated for a while, elaborating, clarifying, and distilling,

until they reached a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

Though the exchange left Rabbi Shlomo beaming, it very much worried Reb Avraham. His secret was no longer his alone. He pleaded with Rabbi Shlomo not to reveal it, and Rabbi Shlomo agreed, although his heart ached to see such a rare scholar, groveling away his days as a buckwheat vendor.

But true to his word, their secret endured throughout the ensuing years. Every so often, the pair would convene late at night to study together, their relationship never extending beyond that. Shortly before his death, Rabbi Shlomo drafted a will, and when the time came, the elders of Lublin opened it and discovered his recommended successor: Reb Avraham Kashi, the buckwheat vendor.

Feeling completely lost, the elders approached Reb Avraham. Hoping for clarity, they informed him of their rabbi's designation, but he merely shrugged, reaffirming he was just a simple Jew. Despite their confusion, they believed Rabbi Shlomo's consideration for Lublin's future, held significant import, and they continued to press Reb Avraham, until, to their immense relief, he agreed.

"My agreement is predicated upon three conditions," he explained. "One - my salary will not come from the community's funds, as I intend to support myself. Two - rather than sitting together with all the notables at the front of the synagogue, I will continue using my seat among the common folk in the back. Three - you may call me Moreinu ('our master') but I will not be addressed with the honorific, Moreh Moreinu ('master of our masters')."

Seeing no other choice, the elders accepted Reb Avraham's conditions. With time, his wisdom and erudition became readily apparent, and the community invented creative ways to show respect to their leader, while still complying with his three conditions.

When Reb Avraham opened the store each morning, community members immediately purchased all of his stock, to free up the rest of his day, for the important matters of the community. Instead of moving his seat to the front of the synagogue, the rest of Lublin's rabbis and lay leaders, moved theirs back into the congregation, alongside his. Even the common honorific he had agreed to, became unique, as all other rabbis were addressed as simply chaver ('peer').

Reb Avraham Kashi never grew accustomed to the honor shown him, and carried himself as modestly as before. Before his death, he asked to be buried near the cemetery's outskirts, beside his father, a simple and unlearned man. He also asked not to have a large structure built over his grave.

During death, as in life, his instructions were duly followed.

In Parshat Ki Tisa, we are told that Hashem intended to destroy the Jewish people, in the aftermath of the worshipping of the golden calf, and the smashing of the tablets.

Moshe prayed to Hashem and he said, "שוב מחרון אפך – Please God, relent from Your wrath." "והנהם על הרעה לעמך" – And reconsider the bad that you are going to be bringing to Your people."

It is fascinating that the term used here is 'והנהם', from 'נחמה' – which means 'comfort'. So why is that term used for 'reconsidering'?

Indeed we find, that after Moshe's prayer was successful, the Torah tells us, "ויבהם ה' על הרעה" – God indeed reconsidered."

What we see from here, is that 'comfort' is directly linked to the idea of 'reconsideration'. It is linked to a change of attitude, a change of mind set, and a change of action.

In the wake of tragedy, when we experience grief, God forbid, one can simply wait for the world to come and bring them pity. One can engage in self-pity. But ultimately, in order to grow, to develop and to move forward, it is important that there is change. Because, when one can effect a change of attitude, a change of mind-set, and most definitely a change of circumstances, one is better placed to be able to cope.

Let's consider what happened to the Jewish people, after the Holocaust, the most horrific national tragedy to have befallen us, and perhaps to any people on earth. I think the world would have understood, if the Jewish people were condemned to an eternal state of paralysis and depression. But that is not what happened. In the midst of our grief, with the emotional wounds still raw to this day, we have taken action.

In the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust and the creation of the state of Israel, there was a dramatic increase in commitment to Torah and to Mitzvot, to fighting hate and racism, to improving the values of society, trying to guarantee that the scourge of antisemitism would not raise its head again.

We changed our national circumstances, so that we could move forward constructively.

From Parshat Ki Tisa we learn, that in those trying and difficult moments of our lives – and they affect all of us at a one time or another – of course there is no easy answer to any situation, but most definitely we need to recognize, that 'נחמה' – comfort, is not necessarily going to come from what other people will do for us. Rather it is within our hearts, within our minds, and within our power, to do something in order to bring about the comfort that we need.

So let's find comfort in everyone, by praying for our soldiers who go out to protect us, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah, and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, happy, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual and sweet Shabbat.

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 9
MITZVOT ASEH: 4
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 5

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 139
NUMBER OF WORDS: 2002
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 7424

This year, (5780 / 2020) Parshat Ki Tisa is a special Shabbat.

The Shabbat immediately following Purim is called Shabbat Parashat Parah. The Maftir, from Bamidbar, Parashat Chukat, (19:1-22), describes the preparation of the Parah Adumah (Red Heifer), whose ashes were used in the spiritual purification process during the time of the Bait Hamikdash. This purification was carried out at this time of the year, to ensure that everyone would be able to partake in the Korban Pesach (Pascal Lamb) to be offered on the 14th day of Nisan.

HAFTORA:
Ashkenazim: Yechezkel Ezekiel 36:16-38
Chabad & Sephardim: Yechezkel Ezekiel 36:16-38

בני תשא - פרה

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