

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.

The Tzemach Tzedek And the Agunah

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

The scene is Czarist Russia in the early eighteen-hundreds. Rabbi Menachem Mendel, Schneersohn, the third Lubavitcher Rebbe (1789-1866) (also known as The Tzemach Tzedek) was famous throughout Russia for his holiness, wisdom, all-encompassing knowledge and the many open miracles that he performed, especially regarding deserted wives (Agunot).

Agunot are estranged wives who according to Jewish law cannot remarry unless they have proof of either divorce or the death of their husband.

Such a woman once appeared in Lubavitch (The place of the Chabad Chassidim and their leader, the Tzemach Tzedek) with three small children.

For several years she tried in vain to locate her missing husband until finally her wanderings brought her to the door of the Tzemach Tzedek as her last hope. With no home to call her own she asked if she could receive his blessing, advice or some thread of hope.

But the Rebbe did not give private audiences to women and for some reason also did not respond to the urgent letters and notes she sent to him.

But she didn't go unnoticed. The Chassidim had mercy on her, found a place for her and her children to live and even found her a job in the communal kitchen hoping that eventually the Rebbe would notice her. But he didn't. The Rebbe was a very occupied man, every second of his day was precious, he rarely left his room, never entered the kitchen and seemingly didn't even know she existed.

Months passed with no breakthrough until one of the Chassidim had an idea and put it into action.

The Rebbe had many young grandchildren. This Chassid befriended one of them and convinced him to go to his grandfather, the Rebbe, and ask "What will be with the kitchen-lady?"

It worked; the child entered the Rebbe's study, innocently asked the question and the next day received a written reply: The Rebbe said, "Let her wait."

Now there was hope! The Rebbe answered! He said she should wait. So they waited. But nothing happened.

Meanwhile hundreds of Jews and occasionally non-Jews were constantly pouring in from all corners of Russia and Europe with all sorts of requests and problems for the Rebbe. About a month later, one of them, a well-dressed, by all appearances, wealthy non-Jew, asked to see the Rebbe privately and was told to wait a moment.

The secretary entered the Rebbe's room, informed him of the new visitor and the Rebbe said to let him in.

When the visitor heard that he could enter, he took his place before the Rebbe's door and prepared himself; fixed his tie, straightened his suit, smoothed his hair back, stood straight, chest out, turned the door knob and stepped in.

But as soon as he saw the Rebbe his eyes widened, he put his hand to his open mouth, let out a moan, fell to his knees, and toppled over unconscious on the floor!!

The Rebbe's secretary heard the noise and when he entered, the Rebbe told him to bring the kitchen-woman, two witnesses and a scribe. A few moments later the stranger regained consciousness, his wife and the others arrived moments later and she took one look and identified him! It was her husband! He confessed, admitted that it was true and that he would do whatever he was told, whereupon the Rebbe gave orders that he should immediately give her a bill of divorce. A half hour later the story was over.

But the visitor did not leave Lubavitch. That evening he again went in to the Rebbe, and the next morning he appeared in the Synagogue with a suitcase, asked the Chassidim if they would remind him how to put on Tefillin, and when he finished told them the full story.

Ten years ago things weren't going well for him in business and he decided he deserved more. So without telling his wife or anyone else he simply left home, took a train to a faraway part of Russia where there were no Jews, married a gentile woman and even went so far as to go to the local priest and change his religion.

He went into business and in a short time became a very rich man. He built himself a mansion, had many servants, the simple townspeople there treated him like a king and he felt he finally was living the life he wanted.

So it went for almost ten years. He continued.

"Then just a few weeks ago, as I was returning from my business a shocking thing happened. With no warning, a bearded, old Jewish man with a large staff appeared in the distance. He came toward me until we were face to face, looked at me menacingly and said in Yiddish 'You left a wife and children. It's time you returned and gave a 'get' (bill of divorce)!!' And then turned and walked away.

"At first I couldn't believe my eyes and was really shaken. But I returned home, and an hour and a few shots of brandy later I calmed down and convinced myself that it must have been an illusion. Perhaps I'd been working too hard. And I put it out of my mind.

"Until two days later it happened again. This time in a different place. I was walking from the market when he again appeared. I wanted to turn and run but for some reason I couldn't. I just stood there frozen until the old Jew stood before me, shook his staff and said, but this time in an angrier tone. 'You left a wife and children. Go back and give a 'get!!!'. and again turned and walked away.

"Now I was really shaken. I wanted to tell someone about it, to talk to someone but there was no one to

It Once Happened..

tell, I had no friends there. And this time the brandy didn't help; it was too real to dismiss.

"I was scared. I couldn't think of anything else. I was both afraid it would happen again and strangely hoped it would. Suddenly I realized that I was a sinner. I had abandoned my family and in fact it wasn't right. I was so confused I didn't know what to do. So I decided that if the old man returned I would try to talk to him. That way I would know if it was just an illusion and if not what he wanted me to do? How could I divorce my wife? After all it had been years and I had no idea where she was.

"Sure enough a few days later, just when I wasn't expecting it, the old man again approached me but this time with fire in his eyes. He lifted his staff and said, 'If you don't give her the 'get' I am going to split your head!'

"Trembling and almost paralyzed in fear I screamed out "Don't hit me! Please! I'll do what you want! Anything!!! Just tell me where to go! Where is she?" And he answered "Go to Lubavitch." And disappeared.

"The whole thing shook me so much that, although I had never heard of such a town, I just ran home, threw some clothes in a small suitcase, stuffed a wad of money in my pocket, told my wife I was going on a business trip and left.

"After several weeks of wandering I finally met some Jews, they told me where Lubavitch is and after another week I arrived here, asked some of the townspeople if there were any Jews in the town and they, assuming that I came to see the Rebbe, directed me there.

"Well, that's what happened." He concluded,

"But that wasn't all" he continued wiping the sweat from his forehead, "After I gave the divorce and left the Rebbe's room I began to realize the terrible mistake I had made. So I went back to the Rebbe's secretary and a few hours later I was given permission to see the Rebbe again. I told him what I had done, broke down crying and begged for help. 'Rebbe, what will become of me? How can I fix the mistake I made?' And he answered, "Go from door to door and beg. That is your cure."

"But why did you pass out in there?" one of the Chassidim asked. "We heard that you fainted when you saw the Rebbe."

"Why did I faint? I'll tell you why!" He replied, "because..... that old man with the staff that I saw a thousand miles from here was him! It was your Rebbe!!! I never have been so scared in my life!!"

They say he spent the rest of his life wandering from town to town telling his story, and wherever he went the Chassidim befriended him.

Reprinted from an email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim, www.ohrtmimim.org.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Matot-Massei

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	7:09	8:26	9:01
Tel Aviv	7:25	8:28	
Haifa	7:18	8:30	
Be'er Sheva	7:26	8:27	



Thank You Doctor By Rabbi Menachem Salasnik

'As Senior Resident in Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Dr. Lebowitz was in charge of its often frenzied emergency room. One afternoon as he was making his rounds, the loudspeaker blared a "Code Blue" alert, the words that indicate an emergency life-threatening situation.

A woman had suffered a severe heart attack in the cafeteria upstairs and was in cardiac arrest. Dr. Lebowitz grabbed his equipment and raced upstairs, where he found doctors already working on the woman. All patrons had been cleared from the cafeteria, as a hospital security officer stood guard at the door, not allowing anyone in except medical personnel.

Dr. Lebowitz rushed toward the huddle of people in the middle of the room. "How is she doing?" he asked one of the doctors, who was kneeling on the floor attending the stricken woman.

"I'm afraid it's too late," the doctor replied. "We've been working on her for a while already."

"Let me try," Dr. Lebowitz said, quickly moving toward the patient. He inserted an intravenous catheter directly into her heart to get her started on epinephrine, which would prevent further progression of the blood clot to her coronary arteries. He applied two large paddles known as defibrillators to her body, so that he could send an electric shock to the heart to jumpstart it back into a normal rhythm. Dr. Lebowitz tried numerous times to get a heartbeat, but he was unsuccessful.

The other doctors began to leave the cafeteria, shaking their heads in disappointment that a patient had died right before their eyes.

However, Dr. Lebowitz would not give up ... not yet. He tried a fifth and sixth time to stimulate a heartbeat, but it wasn't happening. He realized that the end was near, if it had not already come. He would try one more time. He pressed the control button on the defibrillator with added emphasis. He glanced at the cardiac monitor. The razorthin line that had been flat darted upwards! There was life!

A doctor called out in disbelief, "You've got a heartbeat!"

Infused with hope and determination, Dr. Lebowitz worked frantically to continue the heart's revival and with concerted effort, he managed to stimulate a feeble pulse. He ordered the medics to transfer the patient to the third floor intensive care unit, where she would be treated and observed every moment. Once in the ICU, her progress was slow but steady.

Dr. Lebowitz returned to the emergency room to continue his full-time duties. Periodically he would call up to the ICU unit to get the latest update on the woman's condition. Six hours later he was told the good news that she was being allowed to sit up in bed. He decided that he would visit her. As he walked to her

room he wondered how to introduce himself. When he entered the room he didn't have to say a word.

A man sitting next to her called out, "He's the one! He's the one who saved your life! That's the one I've been telling you about."

"And who are you?" Dr. Lebowitz said, extending his hand to the gentleman.

"I'm her husband and I saw how you worked to save my wife's life." "Where were you?" Dr. Lebowitz asked. "I was with her when it happened, but then they whisked me out of the room and I stood watching from behind the glass wall."

The woman began crying uncontrollably. Dr. Lebowitz stood there somewhat embarrassed, waiting for her to compose herself. When she did, she spoke softly and said words Dr. Lebowitz will never forget.

"What do I say? Thank you? That's what you say to someone who holds a door open for you, not to someone who has just given you back your life. But I will tell you this. When I go home and see my children I will remember you and say, 'Thank you Dr. Lebowitz.'"

"In a week from now when I take a walk with my husband I will think of you and say, 'Thank you Dr. Lebowitz.' The next time I go out with my friends I will think of you and say, 'Thank you Dr. Lebowitz.' And the next time I have a birthday, I will remember you and say, 'Thank you Dr. Lebowitz.'"

Her words were simple but heartfelt, gentle but powerful. When Dr. Lebowitz left the room he walked out into the hospital corridor and said to no one and to anyone,

"When I go home and see my wife and family, I'm going to say, 'Thank you, Hashem,' and the next time I pray and feel connected to Hashem I will remember and say, 'Thank you Rabbi [Noach] Weinberg,' (who had been integral to his religious growth) and the next time I learn Chumash I will say, 'Thank you Rabbi Weinberg.' The next time I walk up the stairs and don't get out of breath I will say, 'Thank you Hashem.'"

Dr. Lebowitz returned to the emergency room a humbled and grateful person. We have been given the unparalleled gift of life, where every heartbeat, every breath, every movement and sense is a miracle. How is it possible to truly say thank you for our life? How can those two words do any justice in expressing the gratitude that we should be feeling?

The only way is to learn from this patient – in every aspect of our lives, whether it is spending time with our family, enjoying ourselves on holiday, going to work, or just resting, we should be thinking: thank you Hashem for giving me the ability to experience this moment! For something that is as big as life itself, "thank you" cannot be just a casual, throwaway statement; it needs to be truly lived!

Reprinted from an email of Oneg Shabbat (London, UK).

Is change always a good thing?

At the commencement of Parashat Massei, we find that Hashem had asked Moshe to keep a diary, so to speak, of all the journeys of the Bnei Yisrael in the wilderness. And we are told "וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם עַל פִּי ה' " 'according to the word of Hashem, Moshe wrote all of their goings out, according to their journeys', " אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם " 'and these are their journeys according to their goings out'. It's quite extraordinary that in one and the same verse we have a switch around in the order of these words and it begs for an explanation.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch brilliantly explains that the Godly way of proceeding in life is 'מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם' – all of our departures, all the changes that we make in life, need to have the ultimate destination in mind – they need to be part of a master plan for a good and productive future. However, we see here that there was a frailty within the minds of the Israelites because what actually happened in the wilderness was "מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם" – their journeys were according to their departures. The departure itself – the desire for change was uppermost in their minds.

Indeed it is human nature that often we crave change. We get bored of what we've got. We want novelty, we want variety, we want excitement in life. Sometimes this is relevant within our democracies when it comes to a general election. It happens so often that there is a mood for change – that people just get used to something and out of a sense of desire for novelty they want to switch what they have for something else. Sometimes change is good and appropriate, but sometimes it is possible that we might actually be sacrificing our long term interest on the altar of change.

Hashem wants us always to remember that our way of life should be 'מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם' – change should be viewed in the context of what is right, with a destination in mind.

When it comes to where we live, the schools our children attend, the appliances we have in our homes, our mindset with regard to the key issues in the countries within which we live – of course, change can sometimes be the very best way forward but sometimes it might be the worst mistake we have ever made.

Let us, therefore, adopt a Godly approach to change, and that is to have 'מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם'. All the changes we make must have the ultimate destination in mind, our long term interests! Let's not change for the sake of change, but rather only for the best. Let's pray with all our hearts, for the recovery of all the sick from this crazy pandemic, as well as praying for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet and happy Shabbat.

Yessi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

Parshat Matot	Parshat Massei
NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 2	NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 6
MITZVOT ASEH: 1	MITZVOT ASEH: 2
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 1	MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 4
NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 112	NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 143
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1484	NUMBER OF WORDS: 1461
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5652	NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5773

HAFTORA:

Ashkenazim: Yirmiyahu 2:4 - 28 and 3:4
Chabad & Sephardim: Yirmiyahu 2:4 - 28 and 4:1-2
(The three Haftorot of the three weeks preceding the Ninth of Av, are called the – שלש דפורנותא - the "Three (Haftorot) of Punishment").

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Menachem Av,
Rosh Chodesh - Wednesday, July 22, 2020.

This week we study Chapter 2 (Diaspora and some in Israel study chapter 1) of Pirkei Avot

חובות - מסעי

Look out for our Halacha and Minhagim Guide for Tisha B'Av and the 9 Days

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המולד יהיה
ביום שני,
10 דקות
ו-15 חלקים
אחרי 1
בצהרים

ראש חדש מנחם אב יהיה ביום רביעי
Rosh Chodesh will be Wednesday, July 22 2020