

# The Jewish Weekly

## The Lazy Son-in-Law

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

Some 200 years ago, on a freezing, snow-stormy night on a desolate road through a dark forest in the middle of Poland, a Jewish businessman's wagon, laden with goods, was stuck deeply in the mud in a blizzard. Perhaps the ice broke under the wheels, but the wind was whistling so crazily it would have been impossible for the driver to hear. One thing for sure, the wagon wasn't budging and the two strong horses, that for many hours had been faithfully doing their job, were now helpless.

The driver tried all the tricks he knew: whipping, prodding, begging them, turning the reins this way and that, but nothing helped. The horses strained until they were exhausted, another few hours in the cold and they would freeze to death. The forest was filled with wolves and robbers who were just waiting for such an opportunity. The horses and the contents of the carriage would be easy pickings. The situation was desperate.

The businessman was at the end of his wits. He turned to the driver and yelled at him over the wind to run to the nearest town; perhaps there he could find someone with a horse or two, or a few strong men to come back and help. They had to do something fast. He would wait here in the carriage until he returned.

The nearest town was the city of Apta, perhaps a half hour's run from where they were.

The driver took a swig from the small vodka flask he carried and began running. But by the time he entered the town it was well after midnight and except for the screaming winds and snow, the streets were enveloped in total, black, awesome, frozen silence.

The driver stood alone and looked around, all lights were out. Certainly everyone was curled up under their warm quilts, fast asleep. Where would he find anyone to help him now? But he couldn't go back. With no choice he began walking, hoping to find some sign of life... but in vain. It was so hopeless he wanted to cry.

He saw a dim light in the Synagogue; he had to get out of the cold.

He entered the silent building, tried to warm himself up and after a few seconds burst into tears.

Suddenly he heard from a corner of the room someone say something. He looked up to see that a thin, young man who had probably been sitting and learning Torah by candlelight was standing looking at him.

"What's wrong?" the young man repeated. "Why are you crying? What happened?"

The driver walked over to him, dried his tears, shook the young man's hand and told him the whole story of the stuck carriage and exhausted horses in the forest. "Possibly there is a tavern or some other place in the town where they

could find strong fellows who would help push the carriage, or maybe even someone who could lend them a horse or two to help pull it."

The young man told him not to worry, put on his coat, closed his book and told him to follow him. The driver couldn't believe his ears! It was a miracle!! He thanked the young man profusely and thanked G-d for sending him. Soon there would be help! Clearly he knew where there were some big strong men.

The driver followed him out of the Synagogue into the street but to his surprise the young man didn't turn right or left; he kept walking straight.... out of the town towards the forest.

The driver tried to protest, to explain that it was senseless to go alone; they had to go back and get help, bring a horse or even three. But the young man just kept walking swiftly through the swirling snow and freezing wind until they arrived at the site of the carriage.

When the businessman saw they had arrived he jumped, half frozen, out of the carriage expecting to see salvation. But when he saw that this skinny fellow was all the driver had brought back he turned around, held his head in agony and began to moan.

"No! NO! This is what I have been waiting in the cold for, for over an hour?! How is this matchstick going to help get us out? Soon the horses will be frozen dead. Oy, G-d in Heaven! Have mercy. PLEASE!"

But the young man seemed totally unaffected by his words. He just said quietly. "You have already been stuck here too long. I hate to see people being stuck. The time has come that you should continue your journey."

There was something so simple in this young man's words that it caught the driver by surprise. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean, go back to your seat, crack your whip over the horses and continue your journey." He replied.

"And what will you do? Stay here and freeze?" The driver asked.

"I'll get in the coach and return with you to Apta".

Somehow, the tone of the young fellow's voice convinced the driver to jump up onto the carriage without further thought, climb to his place, grab his whip and snap it over the horses. Amazingly, the horses pulled the carriage smoothly out of the mud with no effort! It was as if they were waiting for just this moment.

The businessman and the driver turned in astonishment to the young man, who was standing to the side waiting for the businessman to enter the carriage, before he himself climbed up and motioned for the driver to go.

Minutes later they entered Apta and when the carriage stopped on a main street, the young man alighted and walked quietly off into the darkness without saying a word.

## It Once Happened...

Before they could digest what just happened, the irresistible smell of freshly baked bread wafted softly into their nostrils. The bakery of Apta was preparing for the morning customers. They followed the smell and in just moments found themselves entering the bakery and being greeted by its owner, a religious Jew.

"Welcome! Welcome honored guests. Come and partake of freshly baked bread! Please wash your hands and sit down," he said in the friendliest voice possible.

It was as though they had suddenly been transported into a warm, pleasant new world as though in a dream. They realized that their ordeal had left them tired and hungry. They washed for bread while the baker prepared some hot tea, and as they ate they told their host about the miracle that they had just experienced.

"Young man? Miracles? I know everyone in this city," the baker said. "I can tell you for sure there are no young, thin miracle workers here. Must be someone visiting from another city. Or maybe it was Elijah the prophet! It says in the Talmud that he makes miracles. But you should have asked him for a blessing - if he could do such wonders, who knows what else he could do for you!"

Suddenly the side door of the bakery opened and a skinny stooped over figure wrapped in an old cloth winter coat entered the room. The baker's smile faded and a look of disgust darkened his face. "Nebech! That's my son-in-law! What a lazy bum! The whole day I work like a slave to support him, my dear daughter and their children, and you know what he does?! Nothing! He drives me crazy!"

The driver's face became pale. That's him! Tha... that's the one that ... got us out of the mud!"

When the baker understood the implications of what he was hearing and seeing, his eyes widened like saucers! "Him? He's the tzadik (holy miracle worker)?" He fell with a thud on the chair behind him totally confused, mumbling, "It can't be! It just can't be!"

As soon as the baker's son in law heard the thud and the commotion he ran to his father in law's aid, but when the latter came to his senses he fell to one knee, took his son in law's hand and began to beg his forgiveness.

That night a hidden tzadik became revealed to the world, a great miracle worker who would help thousands 'out of the mud.' He became known as "Ha'Yehudi HaKodesh m'Peshischa" (The Holy Jew of Peshischa).

Reprinted from an email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim, [www.ohrtmimim.org](http://www.ohrtmimim.org).



### Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Nasso

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:58	8:15	8:51
Tel Aviv	7:13	8:18	
Haifa	7:06	8:19	
Be'er Sheva	7:14	8:16	



### Explaining a Tragedy

By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon

There was an Israeli Jew who was completely non-religious. For some reason he “happened” to be in New York for the month of Tishrei and his host was the Rebbe’s secretary, Rabbi Binyamin Klein.

Although he never kept Yom Kippur, out of respect for his host, he refrained from eating or drinking, and came into the shul to see what religious people do on this solemn day. Being that he was an Israeli, and fluent in Hebrew, he had a machzor (prayer book for the holidays) with him, and was following the prayers.

When the chazzan came to the repetition of the Musaf tefilah, and began chanting the story of the Ten Martyrs, he couldn’t contain himself, and demanded from those next to him to explain the answer that G-d Almighty gave the angels.

The angels protested. Is this the appropriate reward for those who devoted their entire life and essence to learn and teach Your Torah?! Hashem replied, be quiet and accept it, or else I will revert the world to nothingness! What type of answer is this, the man inquired? Finally an entity has the courage to ask, but where is the answer?

Most people replied to him, we don’t understand it, but we have faith that Hashem who is our Creator understands better than we. However, the person was not placated by this explanation, he demanded an answer.

So the people around him, pointed to an elder chassid, Reb Zushe Wilomovsky, and said, ask him.

Hearing the question Reb Zushe replied:

There was a king that was making a wedding for his only child. Everyone understands that in general everything in the palace is always on the highest standards of excellence and beauty, but in honor of this momentous occasion, the king demanded that it be elevated to even higher levels, a step higher.

Only the tastiest foods will be served, the servants should seek out the most exotic animals, fish, fowl, and produce. The best musicians would be assembled from the entire country, and so on.

The king also ordered the finest silk and material for the clothing the royal family would be wearing, and then searched for an experienced tailor to custom-make them. The king’s offer was

a generous one, if you make the clothing to my liking, you will be paid enough to live comfortably for the remainder of your life. However, if I am disappointed for whatever reason, you will be thrown into prison and languish there for the rest of your life.

Understandably, almost all the tailors in the town were hesitant to accept such a challenging condition, however, there were a few tailors who were extremely confident in their expertise who came forward. The King chose a Jewish tailor who had an impressive reputation. This infuriated his advisors, and they said to the king, the Jews are thieves, even if he makes a most exquisite garment and receives the king’s generous payment, that is not enough for him. He is going to steal some of the excess material. After all the material has golden threads and small precious stones in it.

So the king added another condition to the contract, if you are accused by eye witnesses that you stole any amount of the material, you will be killed.

Knowing that he has never held on to anyone’s excess material, the Jew agreed.

Two months later, the tailor brought all the garments and the king and queen were raving about its luster and beauty, it was beyond their expectations. Even the advisors admitted that they were a masterpiece. The king instructed the royal treasurer to fill up the bags that the garments were brought in, with coins and precious stones, as payment to the tailor.

But then one of the advisors said, your majesty, we were told that the tailor held on to two yards of material.

Hearing this, the king was fuming with rage and according to the agreement the tailor was to be put to death. Knowing that declaring his innocence wouldn’t help him, the doomed man simply asked for the garments and a pair of scissors as his final wish.

The king was aghast, but it wouldn’t look nice if he didn’t grant the man’s final wish, so they were given to the tailor.

When it was brought to him, the tailor began with great care to undo all the stitches and placed the pieces next to each other unfolding all the folds and opening up all the hems. While the king was aghast that the garments were now destroyed, he saw that all the material was accounted for, nothing was stolen, and he spared the tailor’s life.

Turning to the tailor, the king asked why did you have to undo the stitches, and destroy two months of labor?

That was the only way to answer his majesty’s accusation, replied the tailor. Any other answer I would have given would have been rejected by the so called “eye-witnesses.” But, yes, sorry to say, now there is no garment.

Turning to this Jew, Reb Zushe concluded, Hashem was telling the angels, if you want the answer, I can give it to you, but the only way to do so, is to turn the world into nothingness. Accept the fact that there is a reason.

*Reprinted from email of Rabbi Avtzon’s Weekly Story.*

Nearly every single year, Parshat Nasso is read on the Shabbat immediately following the festival of Shavuot. You will notice in Shul this Shabbat that Nasso is clearly the longest of all our parshiot. And it is important. Immediately after the anniversary of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, we want to show that no amount of Torah is too long for us to listen to, to pay attention to, and to internalize the messages therefrom.

But actually if there is a Bar Mitzvah this Shabbat, you don’t have to feel too sorry for the Bar Mitzvah boy, because three out of the seven columns of the Parsha are pure repetition. Why is that the case?

In that section we read about the bringing of the “קורבנות - the sacrifices”, by the “ראשי-טריבות - the heads of the tribes”, immediately following the dedication of the altar. And each one brought the identical offering, hence the repetition.

The Midrash tells us that it was actually the Nasi on the second day of the sacrificial order – he was Natanel, the son of Tzuar, of the Tribe of Yissachar, who was the hero of this passage. Why is that the case?

On the first day Nachshon, the son of Aminadav of the Tribe of Yehuda brought his offering. On the second day all eyes were on Netanel. What was he going to bring? How would he bring something more spectacular, even better than the first day’s offering?

Netanel realized that if he would do something in that vein, then on the third day the Nasi would try to even better what he had done and so on. Consequently he decided that he would bring the identical sacrifice, and therefore we read all twelve paragraphs, and they are exactly the same.

There is a powerful message that emerges from this text. So often we find - for example when it comes to personal events, family smachot - we are looking all around to think ‘What do others think about our private event?’

As a result, so many families engage in totally unnecessary expenditure because they are trying to do better than others. From the Parsha of Nasso we learn that it’s crucially important that we do what is right, and indeed when it comes to communal affairs, one-upmanship should have absolutely no place in our midst.

So let’s pray for the soldiers, police and medical professionals protecting us through this very tough time in Israel and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet and happy Shabbat.

*Yossi*

### The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 18  
MITZVOT ASEH: 7  
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 11

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 176  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 2264  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 8632

HAFTORA: Shoftim 13:2 – 25

This week we study Chapter 1 of Pirkei Avot

**תפילות  
נשוא**

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