

The Jewish Weekly

In Loving memory of

Hershy Weiss

הבחור ישראל צבי

בן משה הי"ו

י"ט מנחם אב תשפ"א

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

The Divorce Solution

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

In 1740, the Baal Shem Tov came to visit the city of Slutsk. Many of the local inhabitants came to greet him. Among them was the aged scholar, Rabbi Uri Nattan Nata, who as a youth was known as the ilui of Karinik, near Brisk.

His son, Shlomo, who had initially been educated at home by his father, left home at the age of fourteen to seek the scholarly environment of Yeshivas - first in Vilna, then in Jorodna, and then in Cracow. There he had met a prominent scholar, Rabbi Menachem Aryeh, who was one of the hidden righteous. Reb Menachem accepted him as his disciple in the study of chassidut on condition that their connection is kept secret.

At the age of twenty-two, Shlomo returned to his childhood home in Slutsk. His father was overjoyed with his progress in learning, and arranged a marriage with the daughter of the leaseholder of an inn, Reb Eliyahu Moshe, who lived in a nearby village.

About a half a year after their marriage, however, the young wife tragically, lost her sanity. Since she was not in a mental state to legally accept a bill of divorce, Reb Shlomo was unable to remarry.

During the Baal Shem Tov's visit to Slutsk, Shlomo's father, Uri Nattan Nata, described their sad situation to him and asked for his advice and blessing. Soon thereafter, the unfortunate young woman's father, Eliyahu Moshe, also approached the Baal Shem Tov and asked for his advice and a blessing for her recovery.

Later the same day, the Baal Shem Tov invited both fathers to meet with him together. He politely asked if either of them bore a grudge against the other. The bridegroom's father, Reb Uri Nattan Nata, had nothing but respect for his mechutan (relative by marriage), the bride's father. He extolled that despite the pressure of business, the innkeeper fixed times for the study of Torah, maintained a hospitable house that was open to all comers, supported Talmudic scholars generously, and maintained his son-in-law in the most respectable manner.

Since Shlomo had been mentioned, his father-in-law, Eliyahu Moshe, now spoke most highly of his noble character. He was clearly proud of his son-in-law who, in addition to his assiduous study schedule, always found time on weekdays to conduct study circles for the simple farming folk who lived round about, teaching them Chumash with Rashi's commentary, and the moral lessons of Ayn Yaakov; and on Shabbos he would read for them from the Midrash and the Ethics of the Fathers. While teaching, he imbued them with a brotherly love for each other, explaining to them that no man's profit ever came at the expense of that which Divine Providence had destined for another. In a word, he was well loved by the villagers from all around, and they all were praying that his young wife would be restored to complete health, and that he would return to teach them as in happier times.

The Baal Shem Tov listened carefully to both fathers, and then said: "With Hashem's help, I will be able to help the young woman return to complete health and restore her mind to its original clarity - but only on one condition: That when this happens the young couple not live together, and when several days have passed, and she is in a fit state according to the Torah Law to accept a Get (rabbinically sanctioned document of divorce), she accepts it from her husband with a willing heart."

The two fathers were stunned! Rabbi Uri Nattan Nata proposed various legal objections to such a divorce, and Reb Eliyahu Moshe argued that his daughter would be grieved by such a procedure, since she

respected her husband highly. He was certain that his son-in-law would likewise be distressed. He himself was prepared to contribute an enormous sum to charity - in the merit of which he begged the Baal Shem Tov to pray for her recovery, but to allow the young couple to rejoin each other in the love and harmony to which they were accustomed. The Baal Shem Tov answered unequivocally - that if they did not agree to the condition that he had stipulated, he would not be able to help them.

A few days later, they called on the Baal Shem Tov together with the young husband, and told him that they accepted his condition - though of course they could not guarantee that his stricken wife would agree. Upon hearing their reply, the Baal Shem Tov instructed Reb Eliyahu Moshe to immediately go home and tell his sick, ailing daughter that the Baal Shem Tov had come to Slutsk and had requested for her to come to speak with him about an important matter.

Hearing that, the two fathers looked at each other in amazement.

"But Rebbe, for the last six years," Eliyahu Moshe protested, "she has not uttered a syllable! She just sits between the stove and the wall, and can barely be fed. In a word, my poor daughter is utterly out of her mind. How can I possibly explain to her your request?"

The Baal Shem Tov did not reply.

Making his way homeward with a heavy heart, Eliyahu Moshe remarked to his mechutan that if the Baal Shem Tov had seen the state in which his daughter was to be found, he would not have spoken as he had. Uri Nattan Nata, in turn, sighed in sympathy from the depths of his heart for everyone suffering from this matter.

Not so his son, Shlomo. Before his marriage, when he had been a disciple of Rabbi Menachem Aryeh, he had been introduced to teachings of the Baal Shem Tov. Now that he had met him in person, and had heard his teachings, he became attached to him with all his heart. He therefore told his father-in-law that he thought they should follow the instructions of the Baal Shem Tov implicitly. Reb Uri Nattan Nata added that since they had already accepted the far more difficult condition of their daughter being crazy, they should certainly proceed to carry out the instruction that they attempt to speak to the young woman.

Opening the door to his house, Reb Eliyahu Moshe found his daughter sitting in her accustomed corner behind the stove. He told his wife all that the Baal Shem Tov had said, adding that he was widely reputed as a miracle worker.

To their amazement, their daughter suddenly rose. She approached her mother and father quietly, and in a voice they had not heard for six years, asked who was this person who worked wonders. They told her that the man about whom they were speaking was called the Baal Shem Tov, a renowned tzaddik. She answered that before hearing any more, she first wanted to immerse herself in a mikveh for purification.

After going to the mikveh, the young woman began eating, speaking and sleeping as if completely normal, though she felt very weak. On the third day, she had a high fever and in her delirium spoke about the Baal Shem Tov. When her father heard her crying and asking to be taken to the wonder-worker, he was suddenly reminded of what the surprising sudden turn of events made him forget - that the Baal Shem Tov had asked to see her. He told her of the Baal Shem Tov's request and she was visibly happy to receive the message. On the very next day, accompanied by her parents, she made the journey to Slutsk.

Reb Shlomo soon heard of his wife's recovery, for his father-in-law had sent a special messenger with the news. He now began to speak with his father about the

It Once Happened...

principles of chassidut taught by the Baal Shem Tov. He explained the emphasis which the Baal Shem Tov gave to the mystical teachings of the Kabbalah; the workings of Divine Providence not only for man, but regarding all created things, even the inanimate; the intrinsic holiness and worth of even the simplest fellow Jew; the importance and obligation of Ahavat Yisrael; serving Hashem with a joyful heart; and so on.

The aged scholar pondered these matters all day and throughout the following night. On the next day, he set out to tell the Baal Shem Tov what his son had told him of his teachings, and added that he desired to become his disciple. At the same meeting, he told the Baal Shem Tov of the good news that had just reached his son. The Baal Shem Tov replied that on that same day the young woman was again unwell, but that when her father would carry out his mission she would recover and come to see him.

When the young woman and her parents arrived at Slutsk, she and her husband entered the room of the Baal Shem Tov. He told them that they would have to divorce. With bitter tears, the unfortunate young woman told the Baal Shem Tov how highly she respected her husband for his refined character. If, however he decreed that they should divorce, he must surely know that she was unworthy of such a righteous husband, and felt it her duty to comply. Shlomo, likewise moved, told the Baal Shem Tov that his wife exemplified all the noble attributes by which the Sages define a good wife. If, however, the Baal Shem Tov ordered that they divorce, he too would obey.

The Baal Shem Tov arranged to see them in four days; he would then arrange the legalities required by Jewish Law.

For the next three days the young couple and their parents fasted and prayed. On the fourth day, with heavy hearts, they made their way to the tzaddik. They found a Rav, a scribe and two witnesses already waiting. The Baal Shem Tov asked them if they agreed wholeheartedly to the divorce. They answered that they believed that whatever the Baal Shem Tov told them would be for the best, and since they loved each other, each of them was willing to proceed with the divorce - for the benefit of the other.

The Baal Shem Tov retired to another room and stayed there for some time.

When he returned he related the following: "Six years ago a threat of terrible suffering hung over your lives because of accusations of the Heavenly prosecuting angel. The Heavenly court's verdict was that you should both undergo the troubles that you have experienced these last six years. But now that you have shown great faith in my words, to the extent that you were both willing to proceed with a divorce, this very faith has freed you from the decree of the Heavenly court. The charge against you has been annulled. Live on happily together as man and wife. You have my blessing that your home be filled with sons, daughters and many grandchildren, and that you both live to a ripe old age."

The young couple remained in Slutsk for three years. They then lived in several major Jewish communities, until they moved to Liozna as chassidim of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of the Chabad dynasty. In 1796 they settled in Eretz Yisrael, where they lived for fifteen years until Shlomo passed away at age 99.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Ki Teitzei

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:42	7:54	8:33
Tel Aviv	6:57	7:57	
Haifa	6:49	7:57	
Be'er Sheva	6:59	7:56	



A Needle In A Haystack

By Rabbi Pinchas Woolstone

I was raised in a traditional Zionist Jewish home in Sydney, Australia. While on a visit in Israel, I became attracted to Chabad Lubavitch and, upon return to Australia, I enrolled in a Chabad yeshiva, which eventually led me to learning in New York. That is when I found out I had Chabad ancestors - including the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Rebbe of Chabad - and I became a loyal follower of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

While I was in New York, I was approached by a prestigious rabbi from another chassidic group, who told me about a family that was searching for their long-lost daughter. She had been born and raised in Boro Park, and she had married there; unfortunately, the marriage ended badly, but her husband - for whatever reason - refused to agree to a divorce.

After this went on for a period of time, she "snapped" (to use a slang term), and she suddenly disappeared. Her family had learned that she had gone to Australia, but they had no idea where. Since I was from Australia, the rabbi who approached me thought that maybe I could help them bring their daughter back to her people.

I said, "Australia is geographically the size of the United States. Looking for someone there without an address is like trying to find a needle in a haystack."

He said, "I don't know what to tell you, but maybe the Rebbe would know what to do."

Before returning to Australia I had an audience with the Rebbe, so I told him this whole story. He asked, "When are you going back?"

I said, "I'm going back Wednesday."

He said, "Sometime after you get back, maybe the week after, you should take a trip to Brisbane."

He didn't explain why I should do this, but, of course, I would follow the Rebbe's instructions without question. So, when I returned to Australia, I got on a plane to Brisbane.

Now, Brisbane is a northerly city, about an hour's flight from Sydney, and it has a very small Jewish community. At that time, there was no Chabad emissary in Brisbane; Rabbi Levi and Devorah Jaffe had not yet arrived in town, so it was a desolate place, Jewishly speaking.

Flying there, I found myself sitting next to a well-dressed, non-Jewish woman who identified herself as a Greek Orthodox Christian. Seeing that I was Jewish, she began asking me theological questions concerning the Hebrew Bible. Toward the end of our conversation, she asked me something peculiar: "What is the Jewish view of a person who leaves the Jewish faith? Is such a person allowed back in, or is the door bolted?"

I answered, "Nobody can ever be separated from Almighty G-d, and if somebody has, for whatever reason, taken a vacation from commitment to Torah but then decides to come home again, the Jewish community will welcome that person with open arms." Then she said, "I want to tell you something - I own a chain of dress shops around Australia and, in Cairns, I have a shop which employs a Jewish girl. She came from a very religious home in New York and I can see that she's living a very different life here from how she

was brought up there. She tells me she's happy, but I can tell that she's not, and I believe that she would be better off back in her own community."

At that moment, bells started ringing in my head. Here I am going to Brisbane on the Rebbe's instructions without knowing why I am going there. And on the way, I meet a Greek Orthodox Christian woman who is telling me about a Jewish girl who left home. Realizing what this could mean, I suddenly got goose pimples all over my body, and I started to shake.

I said to the woman, "You should know that I am going to Brisbane without knowing why I am going there. I am doing this because a Rebbe in New York, who is probably the greatest living sage of our time, told me to do so. He told me to do so after I asked him how I could find a lost Jewish girl."

When I said that, the Christian woman started to shake as well. "Maybe she's the one," she said. "Maybe this girl working for me in Cairns is the one."

I had to admit that she could be right. The woman immediately offered to facilitate everything and to pay all costs involved, so that I could meet this girl - though I declined her offer.

From Brisbane, I flew to Cairns, and I walked into this dress shop. She wasn't there because the salesgirls worked in shifts and her shift had not started yet. I went off to buy myself a Coke, but I was so nervous, I bought a beer instead.

When it was time, I walked back to the store, and there she was. This was the girl I was looking for! Obviously she was not dressed like a religious girl from Boro Park, and she was clearly surprised to see me there - a chassid visiting a women's dress shop at the end of Australia, where she thought she could get away from her people.

I said, "My name is Pinchas Woolstone, I'm a Lubavitcher..." I was trying to find the right words, how best to explain what I was doing there. I decided it was best to just tell her what happened, which is what I did. Then I asked her, "Are you willing to talk to me?"

She answered abruptly, "I can't talk now, I'm working."

I said, "I'll come back when the store closes."

She wasn't overly enthusiastic. She said, "All I want - all I ever wanted - is a get," referring to the Jewish divorce document.

I said, "But you are not religious; what do you need a get for?"

She said, "If you can help me with a get, that's good. But if not, then just leave me alone."

I called the people back in New York, and they managed to finally arrange her get. While I was making these arrangements, I met with her again, and I said to her, "To be honest, your reaction to what happened to you is understandable. But getting divorced from your husband doesn't mean you must divorce yourself from your family, from your community, from Torah and Hashem."

She heard me.

After she received her get, she came back to America and enrolled in a university. This was, of course, a path far removed from her Boro Park roots, but at university she connected with the local Chabad emissary and began attending the Shabbat dinners he organized once a month.

Little by little, she became Torah-observant again. Today she is religious; she is married again, and a mother of a beautiful family. And that chain of events began when the Rebbe said to me, "Go to Brisbane."

Reprinted from website of myencounterblog.com.

A teacher's mistake once caused a national catastrophe.

This week's Parasha of Ki Teitzei gives us the Mitzvah, 'תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח', 'Wipe out all remembrance of the Amalekites from under the heavens - never forget'.

A nice commentary I read from The Chief Rabbi of England and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis says, that in the days of King David, as is recorded in the first book of Kings (Chapter 11), he asked Yoav, the Chief of Staff of his army, to fight against the Amalekites. And it took Yoav six months in order to be victorious. At the end of those six months, he came back to King David and triumphantly he declared, "I have killed all the males of Amalek".

King David said to Yoav, "are you not aware of the Mitzvah in the Torah where Hashem commands us to wipe out the entire people of Amalek - they are the ultimate evil that can ever be on the face of the earth, their very presence will plague good people for the rest of time".

And Yoav said, "but the Torah only talks about the males". King David says, "where?"

As is recorded in the Gemarah, Mesechet Bava Batra (21b), Yoav pointed to the verse in our Parasha, 'תמחה את זכר'. King David said, "not 'זכר', meaning 'males', rather 'זכר', the 'remembrance' of them all".

Yoav was stunned. Suddenly he realised that when at school, he was taught incorrectly. He went out and he sought to find his teacher. Eventually, he located him. By now, the teacher was an old man. Yoav came into his home with a Sefer Torah, he opened it up, he pointed to the verse and he said to the teacher "read it!". And the teacher read, '... תמחה את זכר זכר' - and not 'זכר', the 'males' and not the 'remembrance' - different vowel points.

And Yoav was so angry, he took out his sword and he had to be restrained from actually killing his teacher.

The fact that the Talmud reveals the story to us is a message all about the quality of education. Of course, we must have as many schools as possible, and we must populate them with as many pupils as possible. But together with that, we should never compromise on the standard of Jewish education.

When a teacher or a parent makes a mistake, I don't think it's going to cause a national calamity, but nonetheless, we have a responsibility to always get it right.

So let's try to always get it right and let's pray with all our hearts, 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, loving and sweet Shabbat.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 74
MITZVOT ASEH: 27
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 47

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 110
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1582
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5856

HAFTORA:
Yeshayahu 54:1- 10 (רני עקרה) (this is the fifth of seven Haftorot, [the Seven Haftorot of Consolation] that precede Rosh Hashanah).

This week we study Chapters 1 and 2 of Pirkei Avot



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