

The Jewish Weekly

Engaging the Bungler

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

When his daughter reached marriageable age, Reb Shmuel asked his Rebbe, R. Mottel of Chernobyl, to recommend a match for her. He was quite shocked when the Rebbe replied to him, "What's the rush? She's got plenty of time."

Upon reflection, Shmuel felt pleased with the Rebbe's reply, for he assumed that the Rebbe meant that there was nothing to worry about. However, when he continued to receive this same reply year after year, he began to feel ill at ease.

One year, when his daughter was no longer a youngster, Shmuel asked the Rebbe why he kept brushing his request aside. Seeing his chassid's anxiety, the Rebbe said: "Shmuel, your daughter's mate does exist, and I even know his name. But what can I do if he doesn't want to get married now? He is one of the thirty-six hidden saints for whose sake the world is maintained, and prefers to abstain from worldly pleasures. But don't worry, I'll yet persuade him to take a wife. It is forbidden for a Jew to live alone, especially when his mate is standing in the doorway waiting for him."

Shmuel heaved a sigh of relief. However, when he pressed the Rebbe for further information, the Rebbe reprimanded him, saying: "Be patient. I told you."

Obediently, Shmuel suppressed his curiosity and waited to see what the future would bring.

When Shmuel came to Chernobyl for Rosh HaShana, the Rebbe said to him even before he could ask, "Prepare for a trip. You and your daughter will go to the village of C. after Yom Kippur. You'll be staying there for Sukkot, so prepare yourself accordingly. You will build a sukkah there and invite Yosseleh to dine with you. Everyone in the village knows him. He is your future son-in-law. Over the holiday he will soften his position, and by the end of the festival, your daughter will be a kalla (bride-to-be), G-d willing of course."

The arrival of Reb Shmuel and his daughter in C. aroused the curiosity of the townsfolk, for no Jew settles in a new town on the eve of a major holiday without an urgent reason. Assuming correctly that Shmuel had come to find a match for his daughter, all the local marriage brokers began pounding on his door. However, he dismissed them all, saying that he was looking for Reb Yosseleh.

Strangely, no one in town knew of a Reb Yossel. There were many ordinary Yossels around, but no Reb (Mr.) Yosseleh. However, Shmuel did not despair, and began to look up every Yossel in town: Yossel the grocer, Yossel the driver, Yossel the water carrier. But all those Yossels were happily married. The only eligible Yossel in town was the shammes' (shul caretaker's) assistant - Yossel the shlemiel (bungler).

Shmuel met Yossel in shul where Yossel was busy sweeping the floor. When he finished, he disappeared. Reb Shmuel began to investigate Yossel's habits, and learnt that Yossel slept

under the bench in the Beit HaMidrash (Torah Study Hall). No one knew what he did in his spare time. Sometimes he was seen leaning over a book. But it was said that a glance over Yossel's shoulder at such times would reveal that the book was upside down. No one ever saw him daven (pray) properly, and some said that he could not pronounce the words of the prayers.

Hearing these reports, Shmuel was so downcast that if it hadn't been Sukkot, he would have gone home. He was sure that he had misunderstood the Rebbe's directions, and had gone to the wrong village. The Rebbe could not possibly have been referring to Yossel the shlemiel!

Shmuel built himself a sukkah, and he and his daughter did their best to decorate it. Recalling that the Rebbe had instructed him to invite Yosseleh to the holiday meal, he said: "If we can't invite the Yosseleh, at least let us invite a Yosseleh. Poor shlemiel. He 's probably sleeping under a bench right now. I'll go to shul and wake him up."

Reb Shmuel tiptoed into the shul which was dimly lit by a few memorial candles. Although the service had ended long ago, someone stood in the corner davening fervently in a sweet voice. Only a tzadik (perfectly righteous) could pray like that! Curious to discover the identity of the worshipper, Reb Shmuel crept up behind him. To his amazement, he realized that the solitary worshipper was Yossel, the shammes' assistant. The shlemiel?

When Yossel finished praying, he left the shul, Reb Shmuel at his heels. Soon Reb Shmuel found himself in a dense forest. Hiding behind a tree, Shmuel watched Yossel's every move. Out of the darkness, a sukkah suddenly appeared. Yosseleh entered the sukkah and began to chant the Order of the Ushpizin (the 7 Heavenly Guests) in a voice that was sweet beyond description. Shmuel crept over to the sukkah and peeked inside. What he saw nearly caused him to faint, for at the table were seated seven tzadikim whose faces shone like the noonday sun.

The next morning, Reb Shmuel bought maftir (the right to read the final section of the weekly portion of the Torah), and invited Yossel to recite the blessings. At first Yossel declined the honor, saying that he did not know how to read. However, Reb Shmuel grabbed him by the arm and said: "Yosseleh. The truth is out. There's nothing you can do about it."

Accepting that he had no choice, that Jewish Law bound him to accept the invitation, Yossel ascended the bima (podium). At first, he tried to stutter. However, he soon abandoned his guise, and began to recite the blessings with such fervor, that the entire congregation was overwhelmed.

Shmuel invited Yossel to dine the festive holiday meal in his sukkah, and Yossel accepted the invitation. After the meal, Reb Shmuel said to Yossel: "According to the Rebbe of Chernobyl, you are my daughter's match. Have you any comment to make?"

"The Rebbe only states truth" was the quiet response.

On the night after the holiday's conclusion, Reb Shmuel's daughter happily became a betrothed kalla.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

It Once Happened...

A Yom Kippur Exchange

By G. MaTov

It was the custom in Berditchov that just before Yom Kippur people came with their kvitlach, notes, and two coins, asking the Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, to pray for them on the holiest of all days.

Who in Berditchov did not want a good year? Who did not want the great tzadik to pray for him?! Everyone came with their notes. Everyone found the money to put on the Rebbe's table.

One particular erev Yom Kippur the Rebbe sat by his table for hour after hour. The pile of notes heaped up on one side, the heap of coins piled up on the other. And still the Rebbe waited. "Why?" wondered nervously the entire household. There were still so many preparations still to be made for Yom Kippur!

Shortly before Kol Nidre, a woman rushed in; she put her note on the table and next to it - two coins.

The Rebbe studied the note, then looked at the two coins. "There are two names here but you only brought two coins. You must either give me two more coins or delete one of the names," he said firmly.

The woman heaved a deep sigh and explained, "I am a widow, all I have in the world is my dear son. Our two names are those in the notes. But what could I do? I rushed about all day long trying to scrape together these two coins. I begged and borrowed but still could not get more than this. What shall I do, Rebbe?" she was on the verge of tears.

"My rule is firm. I cannot make any exceptions for anyone. You must decide yourself - who do you want me to pray for: you or your son?"

She sighed but did not hesitate. "For my son, of course! He is my most important treasure. I would sacrifice my life for his!"

The woman had made her decision. The Rebbe nodded and she left.

As soon as the words were out of her mouth, the Rebbe rose and headed joyfully for the synagogue where the people were already waiting for him to begin Kol Nidre. And as he walked along the streets of Berditchov he muttered over and over: "I am going to pray for my people, the Jewish people, upon the merit of this poor widow. She is willing to sacrifice her life for the sake of her son! Ribono Shel Olam - Master of the World: So must You, G-d, have mercy upon Your designated children."

With these words the Berditchover strode confidently towards the amud and began the Yom Kippur prayers.

Reprinted from Tales of Tzaddikim.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Ha'azinu

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:07	7:18	7:58
Tel Aviv	6:22	7:20	
Haifa	6:13	7:19	
Be'er Sheva	6:24	7:20	



The Real Roof

By Rabbi Shmuel Butman

After 70 years of Communism, building a sukkah in public in Russia is actually like the thawing of the snow at the end of the winter. Even in the farthest reaches of Siberia it warms the Jewish heart.

In the last 20 years, Judaism has been rejuvenated across Russia - and when it comes to Sukkot it is really an open miracle, as this joyous festival was almost completely forgotten due to the dangers and risks of attempting to build a sukkah or obtain a lulav and etrog. Still, just like the spark of Jewishness itself, Communism never was able to truly stamp Sukkot out.

To understand how Sukkot is celebrated today in Russia, and not just in the major cities such as Moscow or Petersburg, but in the outlying and distant communities, Rabbi Avraham Berkowitz tells a story he heard a few years ago, when I visited Kazan, a city in the largely Muslim Tatarstan region of Russia.

After the morning services, led by the Chief Rabbi of Kazan, Yitzchok Garelik, on a regular weekday in the synagogue in Kazan, he was introduced to Mr. Moshe Adinov, a 65 year old local dentist and a member of the minyan. He asked him, "How did it come about that you come to shul to pray every day?"

He told me the following remarkable story: "My father was Reb Nachum Eliyahu Adinov. He was a scribe in Kazan before WWII. We kept the traditions in our home, but of course there was no Jewish school. I went to public school even on Shabbat. A lot of tradition was weakened. Nevertheless, I remember growing up with as many Jewish traditions and holidays as were possible.

"My father was afraid for my future. He always told me not to repeat to others what we did at home. 'Be a Jew at home and a Russian in the street,' he always said. I would have never been accepted at university had I been a practicing Jew.

"We lived in a small wooden home, not in an apartment building like most people. We had a besedka, basically an open porch in the back of our home. Every year we'd celebrate Sukkot. My father would cover the top of the besedka with leaves and foliage. We'd invite over many Jewish friends. I always felt a little bad about our sukkah; even though it was the only sukkah in town, I was embarrassed as I thought we could not afford to put a 'real roof' on the sukkah. My father would make Kiddush on wine, tell stories and gently speak to us, and this memory of Sukkot always stayed with me.

"My father died in 1965, and I inherited his home. I wanted to keep the Sukkot tradition alive, so that my children, too, would have an authentic Jewish experience. But I wanted to celebrate the holiday properly! I had friends in the steel industry, and so I had them construct a sturdy aluminum roof that we would put on the top of the besedka each year when Sukkot arrived. I was proud that I continued my father's tradition.

In 1998, Chabad-Lubavitch sent Rabbi Yitzchok Garelik and his wife Chana here. It was so beautiful to have a young rabbi and wife celebrating in public what I always did secretly. It was incredible for me. That year, Rabbi Garelik said to me, 'Reb Moshe, tomorrow is Sukkot. I want you to come to the beautiful sukkah we built.' At night, when I walked into the sukkah, I saw Rabbi Garelik in his holiday finest, holding an overflowing glass of wine, candlelight reflected on his face. And foliage, branches and trees above his head!

"At first, I stood there in shock. Then I was overcome with emotion and I began to cry. I suddenly realized that what my father did was the way it's supposed to be, and for the last 30 years by placing an aluminum roof, not only had I not fulfilled the mitzva of sukkah, I had even desecrated it! Yet I only meant to make the sukkah more beautiful. I was utterly broken.

"When Rabbi Garelik heard my story, he told me: 'Your father is looking down from Heaven with all the great Jews of the past and smiling. I promise you G-d had pleasure in your desire to beautify the mitzva of sukkah, because you did it with such love and sincerity, even though you did not understand all of the details.'

"Since then, I have continued to learn and understand our traditions. I and my family are involved as part of the community and today celebrate all the holidays with their rich fullness."

In Russia today, only synagogues have Sukkot, as most Jews live in apartment buildings. The Sukkot holiday becomes an incredible community event. Despite the cold, everyone comes to the community Sukkah. People sing, spend family time together, laugh, talk, and enjoy the words of Torah and stories that are constantly flowing and keeping us warm.

Reprinted from an email of lchaimweekly.org.



During the forthcoming festival of Sukkot, many of us will be keeping a custom we call אושפיזין. אושפיזין is an Aramaic term which means 'guests'. We believe that during the seven days of Sukkot, seven visitors are there throughout the festival and on each day a different one of them is the leader.

These אושפיזין are Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef and David. We recite a special prayer in which we welcome them into our homes.

Chabad also have an additional seven. These Chabad אושפיזין are Baal Shem Tov, Mezritchler Maggid, Alter Rebbe, Mittele Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek, Rebbe Maharash and Rebbe Rashab.

The custom of אושפיזין is derived from Kabbalistic teachings. These seven great Tzaddikim, their souls of course reside in Paradise, and because of the Kedushah, the sanctity of the sukkah, they feel equally at home within our sukkot, and consequently we can readily invite them into our sukkot during the festival.

In addition, the Zohar tells us that all seven, at one point or other in their lives, left the security of their homes and then they were on the run, or engaged in a long journey, at a time when they needed to connect with deep Emunah, with great faith, to their Creator.

This of course is one of the key themes of the Mitzvah for us to dwell in a sukkah.

I'd like to add a further idea. I believe that אושפיזין has everything to do with nachat. Let me explain.

Often one might think, 'What's going to happen in future years to our descendants?' Please G-d, in 200, 300, or 400 years' time, those who come from our Mishpachot (families) will still be loyal to Jewish tradition, will be marrying under Chuppah, will be keeping our sacred values going. But we don't know. If only we could be a fly on the wall in their homes to see what will transpire.

Well actually, that is what we do with regard to the אושפיזין. Some of the great founders and leaders of our faith are the ones whom we bring in to our sukkah and we say to them 'Look, here is a Mitzvah that is so difficult to perform, we can't actually fully understand it, but nonetheless we are totally devoted to its performance', so that they can gain some nachat, so that they can see that all the effort that they invested in preserving their tradition is indeed being continued through all the ages.

Let this custom of אושפיזין therefore, inspire all of us to redouble our efforts to guarantee that the great legacy of Jewish tradition, which has been preserved until this time, will be passed on successfully by us to future generations, so that if ever we could have a chance to be a fly on the wall in their homes, we would see them performing the Mitzvot and enjoying them immensely.

Let's join together and pray for our soldiers and emergency service personnel who risk their lives to defend and help us, as well as 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, sweet Shabbat and Sukkot.



Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's
PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 0
 NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 52
 NUMBER OF WORDS: 614
 NUMBER OF LETTERS: 2326

HAFTORA: Shmuel II 22:1-51
 Sukkot starts Monday Eve, September 20.