

# The Jewish Weekly

## The Dog, the Fish and the Dream

By Tzvi-Meir Kahn

Rabbi Nachman of Kosov had a relative named Rabbi Yudel of Chudnov who was also a follower of the Baal Shem Tov.

Rabbi Yudel was careful not to accept favors of others. He preferred to provide for himself from his own work, running an iron ore business. Once, Rabbi Yudel went to check on one of his iron ore mines. Being a long way from his home, he decided to spend the Shabbat in a small village near the mine. He asked Reb Meir, a local householder in that village, if he could spend the Shabbat with him.

Reb Meir answered, "Rabbi Yudel, it would be my honor if you would be my guest for this Shabbat. However, I don't have any fish or meat for you to eat at the Shabbat meals. To my knowledge, no one has caught a fish here lately. And while I do have some meat that can be prepared, you being a chassid, won't be able to eat it because you didn't have a chance to examine the knife used by the shochet." [In those days, the chassidim were very careful to check the knife used by the kosher-slaughterer to be sure the edge of the knife blade was razor sharp and free of any knicks that would render the meat of the slaughtered animal unkosher.]

Reb Meir continued, "Rabbi Yudel, I suggest that you journey to the next village where a certain wealthy man lives. He is an old acquaintance of mine and I know that he'll be very pleased to host you for the Shabbat. He has his own shochet and will be able to provide fish and meat that will meet your standards."

Rabbi Yudel decided to follow Reb Meir's advice and started to walk on the road towards the next village where the wealthy man lived. The road connecting the two villages passed through a large pond that one had to cross to go from one village to the other. Usually, the water in the pond was quite shallow. But after a strong rain or in the spring after the snow melted, the water in the pond became much deeper. When Rabbi Yudel reached the pond, he wasn't aware that strong spring rains had caused the pond water to be exceptionally deep.

Just as Rabbi Yudel was about to step into the pond and cross to the other side, a dog jumped in. The dog started howling from fear; it couldn't swim so it was starting to drown. The howling of the drowning dog upset Rabbi Yudel so much that he began to shed tears.

After this experience, Rabbi Yudel decided that the water was too deep for him to continue his way to the next village. So he returned to the village that he had just left.

When Reb Meir saw him he asked in wonderment, "Rabbi, I thought you were going to the next town to celebrate the Shabbat."

Rabbi Yudel replied, "When I reached the pond, I didn't realize how deep the water is at this time of the year. Just then, a dog jumped into the pond. Unfortunately, it couldn't swim and it drowned. It saved my life! Thank G-d. But the howling of the drowning dog upset me so much that I couldn't continue, so I decided to return here for Shabbat."

Reb Meir said, "Rabbi Yudel, of course you're always welcome to stay with me but what will you eat for the Shabbat meals?"

Rabbi Yudel asked, "Could you please see if there is any chance at all that you might get a fish for the Shabbat meals?"

Reb Meir requested a few of the local villagers to try extra hard to catch a few fish. They agreed. Almost miraculously, they returned that very afternoon with an unusually large pike.

When Reb Meir saw the fish, he said in amazement, "In all the years I've lived here, I've never seen such a large fish." The villagers that caught the fish nodded their heads in agreement.

That day, being Friday, Reb Meir's wife prepared several sumptuous meals for the Shabbat with the fish.

Later that night, Rabbi Yudel was sitting at the Shabbat table with Reb Meir and his family. After making Kiddush, eating the Shabbat dinner and singing several Shabbat songs, Reb Meir and his family left the table to go to sleep.

Rabbi Yudel stayed at the table to study a holy Torah book, as was his custom before going to sleep. Suddenly, a strong feeling of tiredness came over him and he put his head down on the table to rest. After a few short minutes, he fell into a deep sleep.

During this sleep, he had a vivid dream in which his departed father appeared and spoke to him. "My son, I was reincarnated as that fish you were eating tonight. Do you remember that man I always spoke so strongly against because he was an informer against our Jewish brethren? Well, he was reincarnated as the dog that you saw drown in the pond. He finally made up for his behavior as an informer when he drowned to save you."

Rabbi Yudel's father continued speaking in the dream, "I was reincarnated as the fish because I publicly condemned this informer. As the Torah says, 'You shall not bear a sin on his account.' My son, the tears you shed when the dog howled as he drowned atoned for me. Please be careful how you eat the fish. Be sure to hold the proper intentions in your mind. This will help elevate my soul."

Reprinted from [baalshemtov.com](http://baalshemtov.com).

## It Once Happened...

### An Anonymous Kindness

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Mrs. Edith Bloch and her husband, Avraham Abba (now both deceased), were in Florida at a hotel on vacation in late winter 1988. Friday night, at the Shabbat meal, a chassidic woman sitting at her table said to her: "You look like a Lubavitcher, I am very sorry about the passing of your Rebbetzin Schneerson. I have a nice story to tell you about her."

This is the episode she related.

"A group of us women were Bobover chassidim and Holocaust survivors. We were all young and married, yet still had not merited to have children. Since we were the only survivors of our large families, we each went to the Bobover Rebbe for blessings, but to no avail.

"One of the group decided to go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a blessing because she heard he was a 'baal mofais' - a holy individual who has brought about miracles from G-d. About 10 of us women decided to join her.

"We knew where the Rebbe lived, because at the time the Bobover Rebbe lived right next door to him. However, when we came to 1304 President Street, we got cold feet and couldn't decide who should be the one to knock on the Rebbe's door.

"We were standing on the sidewalk talking about it, when a car pulled out of the driveway. The woman driver walked out of the car and asked us what she could do for us. We stumbled over our words, but finally we told her about our predicament.

"The woman took out a pad and pen from her purse and asked us for our names. She then proceeded to give us the name of a fertility doctor in Manhattan and told us to call him in a few days."

This chassidishe woman continued and said, "I don't know what happened to all the other women. We all went our own ways. This is what happened with me.

"I called the doctor's office and the person at the other end told me that she could make me an appointment with this very busy doctor in a year. I started to cry and the person on the other end asked me to repeat my name. She then told me to wait. A few minutes later she came back to the phone, and told me that they actually have an appointment for me already reserved for the following week.

"Through that doctor," she continued, "G-d blessed me with a daughter. And that daughter has given me 10 grandchildren!

"Later, I found out that the person who made the appointments for us was none other than the Rebbetzin herself."

Reprinted from an email of [KabbalaOnline.org](http://KabbalaOnline.org).

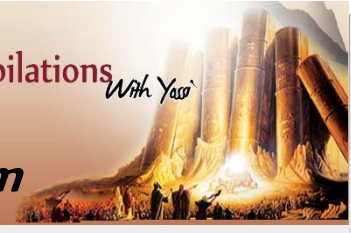
Editor's Note: Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson's 34th Yahrzeit was Monday, 22nd Shevat - January 24th of this year



## Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Mishpatim

Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:34	5:49
Tel Aviv	4:48	5:50
Haifa	4:38	5:48
Be'er Sheva	4:52	5:52



**Words Can Save**  
By Rabbi YY Jacobson

Some time ago I was at a Shabbaton when a young man came over to me and shared what a difficult time he had growing up in the school system. By the time he was fourteen years old, he had been expelled from eight yeshivas. Why so many?

"Everybody wanted me," he said.

"I like the attitude," I shot back.

The truth... nobody could deal with him. At home, his father was even harsher than the principals. He would come home and his father would punish him, double the amount, because of what happened in school. Instead of feeling the safety and the embrace of his father, he was given distance and apathy. When he turned fourteen, his father put him on a plane to Israel. "Even he couldn't stand me," the man said.

When I arrived, I started going to one Slonimer shul in Bnei Brak. I had no other place to go. Every day, there stood a ninety-five year old man, whom I later learned was Asher Arkovitch. He had been a Partisan in the Second World War and survived. He got married, but for the past ten years, his wife had been ill, and he had taken care of her. Recently, she had passed away, leaving Reb Asher, at age 95, alone.

But even with his loss, Reb Asher davened as if he was truly talking to Hashem. It was a real, bona fide conversation. You could feel his words in the room.

One morning, after everyone had filed out of the shul, those who remained were the boy and Reb Asher. With just the two of them, Reb Asher turned to him and said, "I haven't seen you around before. What are you doing here?"

The boy told him exactly the situation. "I haven't had luck in any school system. I was expelled from eight schools, and my father sent me here to Israel."

Reb Asher looked the boy in the eye and gently said, "You know, we say every day in the prayer of Ashrei, 'Le'hodia livnei ha'adam gevurosav ... - To inform mankind of Your greatness.'" Literally, it means that Hashem wants us to spread recognition about His strength and royalty. But the Maggid of Lechevitch provided another interpretation. You know why we talk so much about Hashem's infinity and majesty? To inform each and every person of their own greatness.

With every person you meet, draw out their strength and let them know about it. Show them their own beauty, their own glory, their own

profundity, their own holiness. We talk about Hashem's greatness, not because He needs our compliments, but because we need to do the same to others. If Hashem is great, that means He didn't make a mistake when He created you. If Hashem is omniscient and omnipresent, that means that when He created you, He was making the statement that the world is incomplete without your contribution. Make others cognizant of their own power, of their own fortitude, of their own majesty, of their own creativity, of their own inner, infinite dignity and light and gift.

"Rabbi Jacobson," said this man, now an adult, standing in front of me, "I got into another yeshiva in Israel, and six months later, I was expelled. I then got into a tenth school a half a year later, until the principal said, 'You're not for us.'"

Here I was, 15 years old with a record of ten schools expelling me. I had nobody to turn to. I didn't have a father to call. I was so lost in the world that I decided I can't live any longer. The pain was just too deep. The loneliness, the solitariness was just too profound.

One morning I walked to the roof of a tall building. It was 11 o'clock in the morning. I began pacing at the edge of the roof, about to jump and take myself out of my agony. And suddenly, I had a flashback of that conversation I had one year ago when this old Jew, Asher Arkovitch, found me and told me, 'Whatever happens, never forget about your strength.'

And there and then, on that rooftop, I told myself, 'You know, before I jump, I first have to become aware of my strengths and then I'll make a decision.' I walked back. I went down. I got my life together, and here I am today, married with three beautiful children and an extraordinary wife. And I built a successful business.

I looked at the man who had tears streaming down his eyes. My eyes also moistened. Would Reb Asher ever have known the impact his words had, on that morning in a Slonimer Shul in Bnei Brak, to a fourteen year old boy? Could he have imagined the life-altering influence? They literally saved a life from suicide. Don't be stingy with words. Don't be stingy with gestures. Don't be stingy with hugs. Don't be stingy with embraces. Don't be stingy with letting every person you meet know about their strengths, their beauty, their amazing gifts.

Every person is a manifestation of Hashem in this world. This is true of anyone. And what about your own children? Never take your sight off that target. When you believe in your children, you allow them to believe in themselves.

*Reprinted from an email of the TorahAnyTimes Newsletter.*

The doctor was doing his rounds in the hospital, and he walked into one patient, and told his family, let him eat and drink whatever he wants and then walked over to the next patient and told his family, that he had to refrain from certain foods at certain times, and certain drinks at certain times. After leaving the patients, one of the residents walking with the doctor asked him why to this one you said eat and drink all you want and to the other one you gave very specific diets. The doctor explained, the first patient you saw is on his deathbed, he will not survive this illness, and is going to die no matter what he eats, so I am letting him enjoy his last few days of existence. The other patient, has his full life ahead of him and will get out of this sickness, he just needs to watch his diet for now.

This story is brought down in the Midrash Tanchuma, on this week's parsha. The Midrash asks, why is it such a big problem if one Jew takes another to a secular court to fight out monetary business? The Midrash answers with this story, and tells us that the word "ואלה - these are" at the beginning of the parsha, is coming to add praise to the passuk of earlier on, where Hashem says I gave the Jewish nation "חוק - law" and "משפט - judgement", so here is the משפט Hashem gave the Jewish people. The first patient in the story is the secular court, who are not making it past the "דמיונות - imagination" that this world portrays, but the Jewish nation, who has the potential to get past this ailment of this world, and can do it, they just need to play by a different set of rules, and keep to certain diet constrictions. The secular courts play by different rule books and we as Torah observant Jews, need to go to a Torah court and follow their ruling.

Friends, we are special and we are different, do not mistake this to be racist, we respect every one of G-d's creations, but just like monkeys are not fish, and fish are not lions, the Jewish people are different, and unique, let us be proud of being part of the Chosen nation by praying for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, for peace 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 and sweet Shabbat. *Yossi*

The Jewish Weekly's  
**PARSHA FACTS**

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 53  
MITZVOT ASEH: 23  
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 30

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 118  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1462  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5313

HAFTORA:  
Yirmiyohu 34:8-22; 33:25-26

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Adar 1

Rosh Chodesh will be Tuesday & Wednesday,  
February 1 & 2, 2022

**תורנית משפטים**

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ראש חדש אדר א' יהיה ביום שלישי ויום רביעי  
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