

The Right Thing

THE RESCUE



A DEBATE BROKE OUT BETWEEN the Rozovsky family and the residents of Grodno regarding who would take over after **Reb Michal David Rozovsky**, the Rav of Grodno, passed away. The Rozovsky family wanted **Reb Yehoshua Heshel**, the older brother, to replace the Rav, but the townspeople wanted **Reb Shmuel** to become the new Rav, as they felt he was a greater *talmid chacham* and was thus more fitting for the position.

They decided to ask **Reb Chaim Ozer**, זצ"ל, to rule the quandary. The two opposing sides were scheduled to come to Reb Chaim Ozer at ten in the morning. Eight o'clock, that morning, Reb Shmuel came to Reb Chaim



Ozer, telling him that the matter was not up for debate. "There's no need for deliberation," he told Reb Chaim Ozer. "I've decided not to be the Rav; my older brother should be the Rav."

Two hours later, the delegation arrived at Reb Chaim Ozer's desk. They discussed the issue, and Reb Chaim Ozer ruled in favor of the older brother, Reb Yehoshua Heshel.

A year later, the city was still not at peace with Reb Yehoshua Heshel. The community eagerly yearned for R' Shmuel, because of his brilliance, charisma, and personality. Reb Shmuel realized that as long as he lived in Grodno, his personality would cast a shadow over his older brother, preventing Reb Yehoshua Heshel's influence from spreading to the community. Although his older brother was fitting for the position, the city wouldn't fully accept him as long as Reb Shmuel lived there.

Reb Shmuel made a *goral haGra* (using a Chumash to know what to do and where he should go). The *goral* fell on the *pasuk* telling Avraham to leave his homeland and settle in the land that Hashem would show him.

Reb Shmuel understood that this was telling him to move to Eretz Yisrael to protect the dignity of his brother. He came to Eretz Yisrael without family, but he felt that it was a worthwhile sacrifice for his brother's honor and for avoiding *machlokes*.

Some years later, the war broke out. The Germans killed the entire city of Grodno *al kiddush Hashem*, including Reb Yehoshua Heshel. Reb Shmuel, however, was the sole survivor of his entire family.

He ended up becoming the world-famous Rosh Yeshiva of Ponovezh, whose brilliance lights up the entire world. Where did his salvation come from? It came from avoiding *machlokes*.

This story teaches us (a) you never lose from being *mevater*. Reb Shmuel was *mevater* becoming the Rav, and that saved his life. (b) Even when things seem bad, it's all good. In Grodno, Reb Shmuel was appreciated and sought after; in Eretz Yisrael, he was a stranger. But that move and those hardships saved his life. All the Torah that he taught and continues to teach through his *sefarim* and students is the product of those initial difficult years in Eretz Yisrael.

THE UNFORGETTABLE CHECK

The Ponovezher Rav זצ"ל, known for establishing Torah in Bnei Brak by setting up his yeshiva there, would travel around by foot collecting enormous sums for the establishment and maintenance of his enterprise. Returning from a fundraising trip, the Rav stopped by the *bimah* in the yeshiva and showed the onlooking crowd a check given by one of the wealthiest individuals of Frankfurt. On it was written an enormous sum, enough to sustain the yeshiva for about half a year.



"When I arrived in Frankfurt," he told them, "I knocked on doors one by one. In one house, they opened, and in other they didn't; and so I moved from house to house. One day, Hashem summoned a special *askan* who

informed me that it was not proper to go around by foot. "The Rosh Yeshiva of Ponovezh shouldn't be going door-to-door. Sit in your house, and we shall arrange for you meetings, as is customary with important people, and this is how you will reach your goal."

When the *askan* came to speak with one of the very wealthy people and described to him the activities of the yeshiva, the rich man said: "Tomorrow at eight o'clock, I'll be traveling out-of-town. Please have the Rosh Yeshiva come to the train station at a quarter to eight, and we'll 'sort out' the matters."

"For the first time in my life," says the Ponovezher Rav, "I woke up at seven o'clock. I immediately calculated that if I daven with a *minyán*, I'd 'lose' the meeting with the rich man, as he was heading out-of-town. Better that I daven at home, I figured, as the *talmud Torah* of the yeshiva was on the line, and its worth forsaking davening with a *minyán* for the learning of the entire yeshiva.

"However, I immediately rejected that thought, as Chazal say that '*No one listens to me and loses!*' (*Midrash Rabbah, Reeb 45*). I will go to shul, daven properly with a *minyán*, and Hashem will get me the money I need from another place.

"I finished the davening at 8:30. I thought to myself, 'I'll do my part by going to the train station. Maybe my salvation will grow from there, or from some other place, but I shall do my part. Indeed, I got there at 8:45, a whole hour after we were supposed to meet.

"Five minutes later, the rich man came running in, excessively apologizing for making me wait the full hour. 'I'm so sorry I delayed. I feel so bad. I want to compensate you, so I'll give much more than what I'd anticipated giving you.'

"He then gave me this check, which you can see will finance the yeshiva for six months."

זכרו תורת משה

The Ponovezher Rav continued: "I did not come to show you this check as a proof to the words of Chazal. We all believe the words of Chazal, and they don't need support. Rather, I'm here to show you that not only are there no losses from keeping the Torah and mitzvos; instead, we gain many times over. Had I hurried and davened without a *minyan*, I would indeed have arrived at the train station at the appointed time, and after waiting for him without him showing up, I would've left with no donation.

"Rather, only because I davened with a *minyan* did I end up being there at the time he showed up and receiving the check, plus much more. This is why I'm standing here to tell you this story.

There are many times where we think that by avoiding doing what's right, we'll gain. But, in essence, when we follow what the Torah says, we come out the winner."



THE YESHUAH!

When David's family outgrew its apartment in Yerushalayim, he thought about building an extension, but was soon overwhelmed with the enormity of the project. This was not a matter of luxury; his family simply couldn't manage any longer.

However, the project was going to be costly. It wasn't like he had a lot of money; buying his apartment in the first place was already a stretch to his finances. In addition, getting approval from his neighbors was going to be a daunting task, let alone the permits from the municipality, which were another expense he didn't know from where the money would come. He knew he was going to need a lot of *siyata d'Shamaya* to get this all accomplished, especially since he didn't have the money to do it.

David decided to take upon himself something to be *zocheb* for extra success. The next day, he was learning from the *Shulchan Aruch* and came across a *Rama* that rules that a person should choose a worthy wife and not marry one for wealth. The *Rama* adds that a person should take from his in-laws only as much of a dowry that they give him willingly, and then he'll succeed (see *Even Ha'Ezer*, beginning of *siman beis*).



He also recalled a story about a Jew who was *zocheb* to great children and ample *parnassab* in the *zechus* that he gave up the promised dowry, because it was too hard for his in-laws to keep it up.

He decided to follow the *Rama's* advice and went to his father-in-law. Thanking him for all the help that he had given them until that point, David told him that although he had committed to pay a certain amount every month, if it was becoming too hard, then he would happily forgive the money.

His father-in-law's face lit up. He said it had become a big struggle for him, especially with his other son's upcoming wedding. He didn't know how he was going to continue with it. He said that he had saved up enough to continue giving him half the amount that they agreed upon, and would appreciate if they'd make due with just half. David said that he and his wife were happy to forego the rest, and they parted happily.

Here, when David needed the money the most, he took it upon himself to unburden his father-in-law from paying the money that he promised him. But he didn't stop there. He wanted to find a way to help his father-in-law pay for the upcoming wedding expenses as well. He managed to get three different loans from *gemachs* on behalf of his father-in-law, totaling 100,000 shekels.

What happened after that was truly amazing. On the same day that the money was transferred to his father-in-law's account from the *gemachim*, he was notified that his own account was unexpectedly credited with that exact same amount of money. He had applied months earlier for a special *tzedakah* fund that just that day approved his grant.

Moreover, the amount he got was far more than he'd applied for. He didn't understand how it had happened, but it was clear that Hashem was behind it. He later received even more money and so much *siyata d'Shamaya* in the days following.

Hashem helped him in ways he could have never imagined. He made *hishtadlus* that seemed to be counterintuitive, but when it comes to Hashem, it doesn't go by what seems to work in the natural way of the world. It goes by doing His will.



THE TZITZIS STORY!

One of the famous publicized stories after the attack of Simchas Torah is how a pair of *tzitzis* saved a group of soldiers. The story goes like this:

A *yesomab* from Eretz Yisrael approached **Rav Chaim Zaid** saying that she has 6,000 shekels in her savings. She wanted to use that money to buy pairs of *tzitzis* for Israeli soldiers. Rav Chaim took the money and bought 127 pairs of *tzitzis*.

When they approached the army base to give the *tzitzis* to soldiers, they were not granted entry because they had word that a terrorist was hiding somewhere in the area. Instead, Rav Chaim and his assistants were forced to throw the *tzitzis* over the fence to soldiers standing on the other side. And so they did.



When the bag with the *tzitzis* was being thrown into the base, a wind came and blew it in a different direction. Seeing something in the air flying toward him, the terrorist who'd been hiding in the area suspected that a grenade was being thrown at him. He ran out of his ambush, was spotted immediately, and was shot on the spot.

Reb Yaakov Rahimi repeated this story in English, and several weeks later, he got a call from a wealthy man in Florida. "I'd like to be the 'father' of this orphaned-girl," he told R' Rahimi. "Let me know when this orphan gets married. I'll cover the expenses of her wedding. Such an orphan! I want to be the one bringing her to her *chuppah*, and I'll buy her an apartment in Yerushalayim as well!"

The girl is now engaged, and her wedding will be paid in full *b'ezyras Hashem*, and she'll have a beautiful apartment in Bayit Vegan! She took her life savings and used it toward a mitzvah, not knowing where her basic expenses would be paid for, and we all see how Hashem gave it back more than a hundred times! You never lose out from doing the right thing!