

In Good Hands

THE GREATER HALF!

In 1877, during the war between Russia and Turkey, there were no *esrogim* available in the Russian Empire, as their enemy Turkey was the source of the *esrogim*. In Vilna, only one esrog was for sale; a sailor had smuggled it in, even swimming it through the Black Sea while holding it in his teeth! Reb Leib, A Litvish man, who was not a wealthy man, sold his house for 150 rubles to purchase the esrog.



On the first day of Sukkos, Reb Leib first made a brachah himself on the esrog before giving it over to the line of people lining up several blocks long to shake the esrog. However, the

eagerly waiting crowd pushed, causing a jostle that made the esrog fall, breaking off its *pitom*.

The people standing there were filled with intense pain, that they weren't able to shake the esrog. On top of that, they now had to somehow tell Reb Leib what had happened.

Seeing the crowd standing there silently, Reb Leib asked what had happened. When someone told him, Reb Leib calmly responded, "If there is no esrog, then there is no brachah!" In other words, Reb Leib was saying, that until now our obligation was to shake it, and now not, very accepting of the situation with *simchah*.

"Which act showed more greatness?" asked the **Chofetz Chaim**. "Selling his house to purchase an esrog, or accepting its loss in the way he did?"

"Surely," continued the Chofetz Chaim, "what he said upon hearing the loss was a far greater thing! That shows how he understood Hashem is running the world, and that's the greatest demonstration of *emunah*!" (R' Yechiel Perr's father-in-law shared it with him shortly after hearing it from Rav Yosef Kahaneman, the Ponovezher Rov, who heard it directly from the Chofetz Chaim.)



THE MENTAL HOME!

BACK IN BIALYSTOK, passing a mental home, R' Yankel Galinsky heard two people calling him over. They were crying, begging him to do whatever it takes to get them out of there. "We shouldn't be here," they said to him. "Whatever was said about us is false. Please, do whatever you can to get us out of here so we won't lose our lives stuck in this dire situation."

R' Yankel stood there for an hour, giving them *chizuk* and encouragement. He explained how Yosef was imprisoned for twelve years and soon after was taken out to advise the king... In the end, R' Yankel confirmed that he would do whatever was in his ability to get them released.

Concluding the conversation, one of the men requested that R' Yankel speed up their discharge, as it was a matter of *pikuach nefesh*. "I'm *Mashiach*," he said with urgency. "I must redeem the Yidden already!"

Hearing this, the other man replied: "Sha, sha! What are you saying? It's not time for *Mashiach* to redeem the Yidden?! Why are you speaking like this? *Mashiach* will come when Hashem says so, and I haven't said so yet, so don't tell everyone that *Mashiach* has come!"

Right then, R' Yankel realized why these men were there. Their normal appearance covered up what was really inside them. How they'd first addressed him was misleading, but he knew now that they were there for good reason.

This story, told by R' Yankel, can serve as a lesson for us. Once they impressed on R' Yankel how they oversee redeeming the Yidden, and that they are running everything, he got how they were missing their brains, and that they didn't understand that Hashem runs everything. Thus, the moment R' Yankel realized something was terribly wrong, he realized there was a good reason for their presence in this home. (Reprinted with permission from *Be'er Haparsha, Vaaira*, p. 25)



THE NEW ROSH YESHIVA

The **Chofetz Chaim** זצ"ל sent his son-in-law, Reb Hershel Levinson זצ"ל, to **Reb Chaim Brisker** זצ"ל, to request whom he should appoint as the Rosh Yeshiva in Radin. Reb Chaim Brisker advised that they appoint **Reb Moshe**



Ladinsky זצ"ל, because he was a massive *talmud chacham*.

Reb Moshe Ladinsky served as their Rosh Yeshiva for about twenty years, and the students loved him. However, the spirit of the day changed, and the popular style of learning became what is known as "the Brisker *derech*." This new and ingenious approach was sweeping the yeshiva world, it was the talk of the time, and the students of the Radin Yeshiva didn't want to be left out.

The Chofetz Chaim therefore invited Reb Naftali Trop to join the yeshiva and serve as the Rosh Yeshiva. Reb Naftali was an expert in this new approach to study, and inevitably, he became the primary Rosh Yeshiva. As a result, Reb Moshe Ladinsky lost his prestige.

The Chofetz Chaim spoke to Reb Moshe Ladinsky and explained that he had no choice. The bachurim wanted the Brisker *derech*, and if he didn't hire Reb Naftali, the *bachurim* would leave the yeshiva.

Reb Moshe Ladinsky replied, "If it is better for the students, then by all means, you did the right thing!"

The Chofetz Chaim was overwhelmed by Reb Moshe's answer. After so many years of devotion to the yeshiva, he didn't take it as an insult that someone took his place.

The Chofetz Chaim told him, "The merit of your *mitur*, understanding that Hashem runs a perfect world, will protect you. You will outlive us."

Indeed, Reb Naftali Trop was *niftar* in 1919, where the Chofetz Chaim lived till 1923. But R' Moshe lived till 1929. The merit of his *vatranus* granted him a long life. (*Torah Wellsprings*, - *Ki Savo* 9)

זכרו תורת משה



THE SALVATION

There was a fellow who was experiencing some chest pains after the fast of the seventeenth of Tammuz. When the pains persisted, he called Hatzalah. The plan of Hatzalah was to take him to the local hospital, just a few minutes from his house. But the man's wife insisted that they go to a further hospital that was known to be better.



When the doctor checked the man, everything seemed to be fine. They did an EKG, they took blood, and his numbers were good. As a precaution, they kept him overnight. In the middle of the night, they did more testing, and again everything was fine.

The next morning, they did a third test, another EKG and more blood work and, once again, the numbers were fine. However, just to be sure, the doctor wanted to do an angiogram on him. There were twenty-four people scheduled for angiograms that day, but they were able to rush this man in to be the first of the day. After it was finished, the doctor told him he put in two stents, one in his main artery, which was 99% blocked. A little more blockage would have caused a massive heart attack.

Hashem has planned all this in order to save his life. The numbers seemed fine, yet all this was planned to be what saved his life.

The man was singing the praises of Hashem. First of all, they found out that the other hospital that they were suggested to go to didn't even do angiograms on site. Furthermore, the man's cousin who was a doctor in a different hospital saw all the his results and said it didn't make any sense that they even did an angiogram, being that all of his numbers looked fine. Nobody had any idea of the danger that this man was in. Hashem saved his life, and he is forever grateful.



WELL PLANNED

Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky once fell ill, and the doctors told him to go to Carlsbad to recuperate there. When Elul came around that year, the R' Chaim Ozer wanted to return to Vilna, but the doctors told him he was still too weak.

They made him stay there through all the Yamim Noraim, including Simchas Torah. It was extremely difficult for R' Chaim Ozer to be so distant from the lively Jewish community he was accustomed to being with. To spend Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with barely a minyan in a place basically devoid of Jews was not a pleasant experience.

On Shabbas Shuvah, R' Chaim Ozer noticed a new person there. He went over to speak to him. The man said he came from America. His brother had recently passed away, leaving a widow and three children. The brother-in-law decided that he was going to marry her and take care of the family.

Rav Chaim Ozer couldn't believe his ears. Marrying a brother's widow who left children would violate a terrible *averah* from the Torah. R' Chaim Ozer told this individual of the severe transgression he would be making if he went through with the marriage, but the individual did not believe him. R' Chaim Ozer tried convincing him every which way, but to no avail. He was ready to do it anyway.

Finally, Rav Chaim said to him, "Is there any rabbi in this world that you trust?"

The man said, "Yes, the great Rabbi of Vilna, Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky. If he would tell me that it is forbidden, then I wouldn't do it."



Rav Chaim Ozer told the man who he was, and the man accepted it. At that moment, he got a tiny glimpse as to why Hashem kept him there for all that time. Hashem puts everyone in different places for different reasons. If we do our best to serve Him, no matter where He puts us, then we will always accomplish what we are meant to accomplish.



ARRANGED BY HASHEM

Reb Yehudah Neishloss related that he was once walking with **Reb Chaim Brim** ז"ל through the streets of Yerushalayim when a woman approached them. Her haggard appearance made it obvious she was going through difficult times. She announced to Reb Chaim with excitement, "Perele is engaged!"

Reb Chaim Brim replied with immense joy, "Mazal Tov! Mazal Tov! How I was waiting for this day! Thank you for telling me! I'm so happy to hear that. Who is the fortunate *bachur*?"

She told him the name of the *bachur*. Reb Chaim thought for a moment and said, "Do you know whom you are getting for a son-in-law? Your daughter will be marrying one of the top *bachurim* of Yerushalayim!" The woman's face beamed with joy.

"Have you heard of the Chazon Ish?" he then asked. "Of course!" she responded.

"In my opinion, your *chassan* is the Chazon Ish of our generation. Did you hear of the *gaon*, Reb Akiva Eiger?"

Tears filled her eyes and began falling, one after another. In a choked voice, she said, "Of course I've heard of Reb Akiva Eiger. Everyone heard of the holy *tzaddik* and *gaon*, Reb Akiva Eiger."

Reb Chaim told her, "I think your *chassan* will be the Reb Akiva Eiger of our generation."

The woman cried and said, "How did I merit this? It must be in the merit of my parents' and grandparents' *tefillos* and good deeds."

"I don't think so," replied Reb Chaim. "In my opinion, it is in your own merits and your *tefillos*' merit." She left extremely happy, and they parted ways.

Reb Yehudah Neishloss asked Reb Chaim Brim, "Who is this woman? A relative?"

"I have no idea," Reb Chaim replied. "But I can tell that she is a broken woman, and if Hashem has planned for her to come my way, it is definitely my opportunity to help her. So I gave her some *chizuk*."

Let's learn two lessons from this story. The first is to take advantage of opportunities. Everything is *bashert*. If you meet someone, there is a reason. Try to do something good. Two: *chizuk*, a kind word, goes a long way. Give *chizuk* to people. Let them feel important. It is one of the greatest ways of showing kindness. All you must do is try, and Hashem will put the right words in your mouth.