

The small waiting room was filled with people. They hailed from many cities and villages, yet all came for the same reason: to seek the advice and blessing of the great *tzaddik*, the Maggid of Koznitz. Among them were a man and woman, their clothes dusty from their long travel. Soon, the *shammas* beckoned and they entered the room of the saintly Maggid.

The woman was an *agunah*—a “living widow.” Her husband had disappeared without a trace many years before. She had travelled to the Maggid, accompanied by her brother, hoping that with his *ruach hakodesh*, he would be able to locate her husband, and she would finally be able to receive a *get* and be free to remarry.

After hearing them out, the maggid called for his attendant.

“Bring a bowl of water”, he said. When the *meshares* returned with the water, the Maggid addressed the woman, “Look into the water, and tell me what you see.” She gazed into the water, and a surprised look came to her face. “I see a big city, with many houses laid along busy streets,” she said. “Look at the marketplace,” instructed the Maggid. “I see a bustling market; shops and stalls line the street, and throngs of people coming and going; buying, selling, and trading,” said the *agunah*. “Look into the windows of the buildings along the street”, instructed the Maggid. “As the woman did so, her face suddenly paled and she cried out in shock. “I see my husband!” she exclaimed. “He is working in a tailor’s shop, surrounded by assistants. He’s holding the sleeve of an ornate coat as he irons out its wrinkles.”

“Take the sleeve out of his hand,” said the Maggid. Without a moment’s hesitation, the woman reached her hand into the bowl. To the shock and surprise of those watching, her hand came up holding the sleeve, still warm from the iron that had been pressed against it a moment ago. The open miracle that the Maggid had just performed left a deep impression on all those present. “Guard this sleeve carefully,” cautioned the Maggid. “Leave in peace,” he told them. “You will have your *get* yet today,” he assured the woman. “Which way should we go? Where should we travel?” they asked. “Wherever you

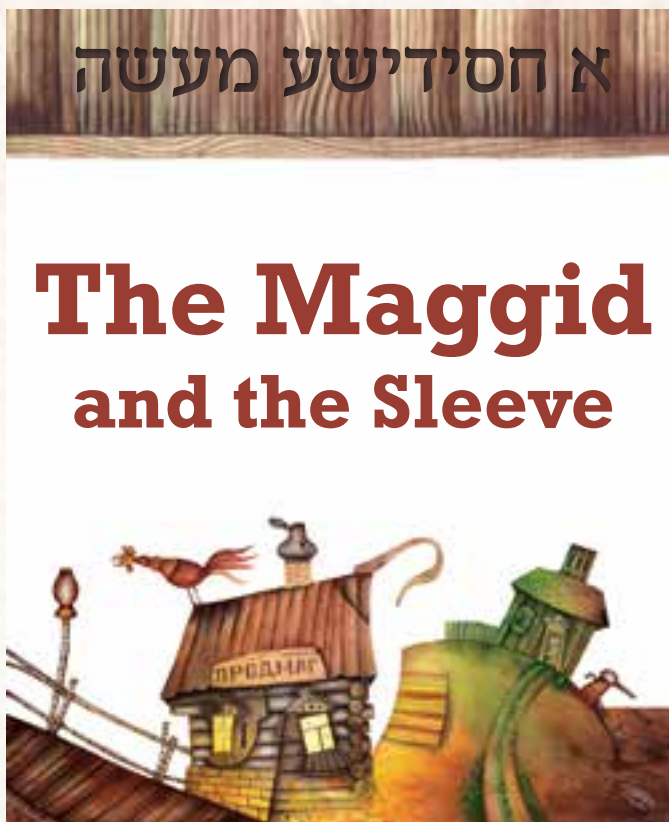
wish,” answered the Maggid. “How will we be able to hire a coach?” they asked. “The driver will certainly want to know our destination, and we have no answer.” “Go in peace,” said the Maggid. “Hashem, in His goodness and mercy, will take care of everything. All will be well, with Hashem’s help.”

With this assurance, they left the Maggid with hopeful hearts and went out into the street. Before long, they saw a coach coming down the street, pulled by two horses. The driver was a crude-looking peasant, dressed in the rough cloth and sheepskin, typical of his station. Hailing the coach, they inquired, “Can we join you?” “Get in the wagon,” was the curt response. To their surprise, he neither asked their destination nor demanded a fee. With complete faith in the *tzaddik*, they

climbed aboard and were on their way. After about half-an-hour’s travel over the bumpy dirt road, they reached a forest. Undeterred by the thick trunks and large roots, the driver pressed on.

As they continued into the woods, the woman and her brother suddenly felt drowsy, and fell into a deep slumber. A jolt awoke them, and to their horror, the coach turned over and they were flung from their seats. When they came to their senses, they found themselves sprawled on the hard earth in middle of the woods. Looking around, they could see no trace of the wagon or its driver. Filled with dread, they realized that they had no idea how far they had travelled, or in which direction the city they sought was to be found.

With no other choice, they began walking. They walked for about an hour until they reached the edge of the woods. As they walked out into the open, they were amazed to find themselves not far from a big city. The *agunah*, seeing it, joyously exclaimed, “Baruch Hashem! The *tzaddik*’s words are true! This is the very city that I saw in the bowl of water!” Several minutes of walking brought them to the outskirts of the city. “Let’s walk the streets; maybe, with Hashem’s help, we’ll find the marketplace I saw.” Sure enough, after a few minutes, they rounded a bend and there it was: the city marketplace, with its overwhelming jumble of sights, sounds and smells. Making their way past haggling customers and harried merchants, they gazed intently into each





window they passed. Finally, they spotted a tailor shop. Looking inside, the woman immediately spotted her long-lost husband. "Let's not be too hasty," said her brother. "If we confront him now, he may very well deny that he's your husband. Let's go and ask the local rav what to do."

A brief search led them to the study of the rav of the city. "Where do you come from," he asked. When they answered "from Koznitz" the Rav said, "That's very distant; 80 *parsos* (190 miles) away." To the rav's great surprise, they replied, "We left from there this very morning." After hearing their incredible story and seeing the sleeve which they had brought with them, the rav was very impressed. He exclaimed, "Blessed is Hashem, who has not abandoned us, and who gave *tzaddikim* of our time *ruach hakodesh*." The *agunah* then described her husband's appearance and the shop where he worked. "I know the man well", said the rav. "He's been living here for a number of years, and has a wife and children." Assuring them that it will all turn out okay, and exhorting them to keep a close eye on the sleeve, the rav led them to a side room and closed the door.

Returning to his study, the rav sent for the tailor, who, wasting no time, appeared before the rav as quickly as his legs could carry him. "Are you married?" asked the Rav. "Surely the rav is aware that I have a wife and children," the tailor answered. "This I know," said the rav. "My question was whether you have a wife from before you married this woman." "I was once married," the tailor admitted, "but I was single when I came to our town."

"What did you sew today?" asked the rav. "Funny you should mention that," replied the tailor. "A strange thing happened to me today. My employees and I were sitting around the worktable, busily assembling various garments. I was ironing

the sleeve of a coat that I was in the midst of sewing for an officer of the army, when suddenly it flew out of my hand and disappeared without a trace. We turned the store upside down, but we couldn't find it. I can think of no explanation for this bizarre occurrence," he concluded. "What would you be willing to give me if I could get you the sleeve?" asked the rav. "That's impossible," said the man. "Quite the contrary," replied the rav, and with those words he rose from his chair, opened the door, and told the *agunah*, "Give your husband his sleeve." The woman walked into the room and placed the sleeve on the rav's table.

The eyes of the tailor widened in shock as his face lost its color. "This is it," he said, in a weak voice. "This is the very sleeve that flew out of my hand." In his astonishment at seeing the sleeve, he didn't realize who had brought it into the room. "This is, indeed, your sleeve," said the rav. "And I believe the woman who brought it to you is your first wife." The tailor looked up and the shock of seeing his wife, together with his surprise at the appearance of the sleeve, was too much for him to bear and he collapsed on the floor, unconscious.

After some effort, he was brought back to his senses. The rav told him the entire story of how the woman came to the city and how she possessed his sleeve. Shaken, the man admitted that she was, in fact, still married to him, and he gave her a *get* that very day, just as the Maggid promised.

*Adapted from the sefer "Sippurim Nora'im" by R' Ya'akov Cadaner, a chassid of the Mittlerer Rebbe. He writes that he heard this story from a man named R. Dovid, who heard it from the tailor, the agunah, and other people who were in the room when she took the sleeve out of the bowl.*