



A Very Serious Joke

Dovid, a studious, pious and honest man, was ready to find a wife and build a home. There was one major flaw, however, which stuck to him and kept all potential candidates away; he was poor and because he was without any financial backing he was still single.

One year, he had the merit of spending Tishrei by his Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritch. Before leaving back home, he complained to the Maggid that he was not getting any ideal *shidduch* suggestions.

The Maggid replied, "Go in peace and the first suggestion that comes up you should accept."

With the Rebbe's instructions ringing in his ears, Dovid went on his way.

Being that the journey was a lengthy one, he could not reach his hometown in one day and was forced to spend the night in a motel.

Observing the scene that met his eyes after he entered, he noticed that the crowd milling around the main room of the motel was made up of lowlifes and jokesters who were being boisterous and noisy. Not wanting to be in their company, Dovid took a seat near the fireplace and warmed himself up from the journey.

His hopes of being discreet and unnoticed were shattered when one of the men began asking him some questions.

"Where are you from? What do you do?" Silently wishing they would leave him alone, he told them in which town he lived and that he was coming from the Maggid of Mezritch.

However, the man did not let up, "What did you ask him and what was the response?"

Not realizing that he was playing right into their hands, he continued with the details of his conversation with the Maggid.

At that moment, one of the pranksters who only saw the fun that could come from what he was about to do, jumped up from his seat and announced, "Wow! I have the perfect match for you. My sister is a young woman and was recently divorced. She has one thousand ruble and she is here and ready right now. If you are ready then let us shake hands and make the *shidduch* now!"

Now, Dovid was a sincere individual who never imagined that others could be so cruel as to have fun on someone else's expense. Not for a minute did he get suspicious about the marriage he was about to enter into. Indeed, the jokester who had come up

with the idea was referring to the motel owner's daughter whom he did not even know; she was a complete stranger to him!

The unsuspecting and innocent Dovid immediately agreed to the *shidduch* and *mashke* was brought to officially mark the engagement.

The father of the girl, the motel owner, was not home at the time and no one was there to step in and grab the reins before things got even further out of control.

The laughing and joking were heard throughout the motel but Dovid did not catch on...

Still not satisfied with the fun they had, one of the members of the group turned to his colleagues and said, "Perhaps we should do the actual marriage ceremony now as well?"

"Well," replied another, "there is no one here who

לזכות
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לרגל האפשרועניש'
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נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' נחום וזוגתו מרת צבי'
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפירא

can write a *kesubah* and officiate the marriage.”

Just then an innocent voice was heard over the din, “I know how to do that,” piped up Dovid.

Hearing this only threw them into another frenzy of raucous laughter as they grabbed a tallis to serve as the *chuppa*.

They then proceeded to have a complete marriage ceremony. At the end of it all, Dovid was now halachically married and bound to this young girl whose father was not even home and certainly unaware of what had transpired while he was out.

As the wedding celebration grew more rowdy, the group of lowlifes began to physically abuse Dovid by pulling his hat this way and that. Things only got worse as they hit and shoved him, all to have fun at his expense. Embarrassed, disgraced and afraid, Dovid left the motel and went to a different one that was owned by non-Jews.

In the morning he returned to the Jewish owned motel but was too afraid to go inside out of fear that he would continue to receive beatings.

Pondering what to do next, he heard one of the workers announce, “The owner is traveling...”

Dovid nervously approached the man and greeted him, “*Shalom aleichem*, my dear father-in-law.”

Needless to say, the man stopped in his tracks completely confused as to what he had just heard. “Who is this?” he demanded.

“Ah, him!” his daughter replied with a grin. “He is the one we played a joke on and even conducted a *chuppa*...”

The father was not comfortable with what he was hearing so he investigated further until his daughter told him all the details.

“You imbecile,” he fumed at Dovid, “what have you done? You did not realize they were messing around with you?!” And with that he landed a sound slap across Dovid’s cheek.

After a moment, however, he decided to change his tactics. “If I am already stuck with this oaf, I may as well be nice to him,” he said to himself, “so that if I need something from

him he will be willing to cooperate.”

In a gentle, soft and caring tone he spoke with Dovid and let him know that he was willing to give him 20 ruble in return for a *get*.

Dovid replied, “Let me tell you the truth. I only took this *shidduch* based on the advice of the Maggid. They may have meant it as a joke but to me it was serious. If you want to end this marriage then we need to do it with the approval of the Maggid as well.”

With no choice, he agreed to make the trip to Mezritch together with his son-in-law Dovid.

In the presence of the Maggid, the distraught father began telling over the comical but sadly true episode that had led to his daughter now being a married woman.

“I am willing to give him 100 ruble in exchange for a *get*,” he concluded.

The Mezritcher Maggid replied, “Go back to where you are staying and I will discuss it with Dovid.”

A few hours passed and the man returned, anxiously waiting to hear what had been worked out.

“I spoke with him,” began the Maggid, “and he is willing to give your daughter a *get* on condition that you give him one thousand ruble. I will also suggest a suitable match for your daughter, a man of fine stature and character. You will receive one thousand ruble from him and in that way you will not have any loss.”

“Whatever you say I am happy and willing to follow,” was the man’s immediate response.

“In that case,” said the Maggid, “you should know that Dovid stems from an honorable family and he is perfect in all areas. The only downside is that he is a pauper but now, *baruch Hashem*, he has one thousand ruble. Therefore there is no one better your daughter can marry. I am telling you that this is a match made in heaven. Go home and be happy.”

The man followed the Maggid’s suggestion and Dovid returned home happily with his father-in-law.

Indeed, the couple did very well together as the Maggid had said. ①

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