



לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' רפאל משה הכהן ע"ה
שפערלין
גלב"ע י"א מר-חשון ה'תשנ"ה
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



Yisroel Ben Sarah Made No Mistake!

"I have a son," said the Chossid, "and you have a daughter, let's make a *shidduch*." The *misnaged* agreed to the proposal and so it was.

The unique relationship between Chossid and *misnaged* that had been limited to being business partners, now grew deeper as they prepared for the *chasuna* of their children. The father of the kallah was charged with writing the *tenaim*-wedding agreements—and he included the condition that his father, a great *talmid chacham*, would be honored with *siddur kiddushin*.

The Chossid glossed over the contract and did not pay particular attention to the details, completely missing this clause. It was only days after he had signed the document that he noticed what he had agreed to. Crestfallen, he thought to himself, "What will I do if

the Baal Shem Tov agrees to attend the *chasuna*? How can I not bestow upon him the honor of being *mesader kiddushin*?"

"I will worry about it closer to the time," he consoled himself and pushed the matter from his mind for the time being. As the date of the *chasuna* approached, the Chossid traveled to his Rebbe and invited him to participate in the *simcha*. To his great surprise the Baal Shem Tov agreed to come.

The Chossid was now in a great quandary regarding his next step. On one hand he felt obligated by the terms he had signed on, but on the other hand it was unfathomable that his Rebbe would attend his son's wedding and not be honored to officiate. The wedding day arrived and he had a bold plan to implement.

Making his way through the shul where the *chupa* would be held, he came upon the *shamash*, who was a strong individual and he gave him a hefty sum of money. "Listen to me," began the Chossid as he laid out his plan. "You need to make sure that you take charge under the *chupa* and have with you the wine, cup and the *kesubah*. When it is time to call up the individual to be *mesader kiddushin* immediately following the circles around the chosson, announce that the Baal Shem Tov is being honored with this and quickly push the cup of wine into his hand. You don't need to worry about what happens next; the worst that could occur is that you will receive a slap in the face. Nu, I already compensated you for that!"

The events that followed under the *chupa* transpired so quickly that the kallah's

father could do nothing to stop it. The damage was done. The family of the kallah refused to participate in the *seuda* and celebrations that usually follow; the embarrassment to the grandfather was too great to forgive.

"Does it really make sense to punish the chosson and kallah for a mistake that was made by the *shamash*?" Slowly but surely, one by one, this argument appeased most of the family and they joined in the wedding. There was one man, however, who was not placated so easily—the grandfather himself. He was not ready to forgive the great disgrace to the Torah that was caused and he could not find joy in the rest of the celebrations either.

The next day, the Baal Shem Tov was ready to leave town but he insisted that he first go to the grandfather and wish him well. The

tension was palpable as the Rebbe made his way over to the house. It had become widely known that the grandfather was so angry at the Baal Shem Tov that he refused to even look his way.

Silence. Complete silence was the welcome that the Baal Shem Tov received and the response to the questions he asked. "Why are you being quiet? I learn Torah and I am a *lamdan!*" Finally, after hearing this, the old man answered the question in learning that the Baal Shem Tov had posed.

"The answer is good but is missing depth."

He went on to give a more insightful response.

"Indeed, this answer is better than the one you originally gave but it is still lacking."

The man tried a third time and this time gave a brilliant resolution.

At that moment a man entered the room carrying a satchel that gave him the appearance of a mailman. In reality, however, it was a lot more sinister than that. The Baal Shem Tov turned to this strange man and commanded him not to harm anyone in the room. As everyone stared in disbelief, he reached deep into his bag and removed three letters and placed them squarely on the table in front of the elderly grandfather.

Opening each one, the grandfather was shocked to see that on each one of the papers was written one of the answers he had just shared. The Baal Shem Tov turned to him and exclaimed, "You see where your Torah has gone?!" With those words the Baal Shem Tov wished him well and went on his way.

The grandfather was dumbfounded by what had just taken place. He felt as though his entire world was collapsing in on him. That was no mailman, it was a messenger from the side of *klipah* taunting him that all his learning had not been for the sake of Heaven. "If indeed this is true, then I must travel immediately to the Baal Shem Tov and learn how to serve Hashem properly; there is no other choice. However, the journey itself could take two weeks and that was wasted time from Torah study. Instead I will stay home and allow the Torah itself to teach me the proper path."

Satisfied with his decision, he threw himself into his learning with renewed vigor. But as he attempted to resume his learning, the constant gnawing of whether the path of Chassidus was correct or not, prevented his mind from focusing on anything else. Frustrated, he decided that he had better make the trip because at

this point he was wasting time regardless.

When he arrived in Mezibuzh, the Baal Shem Tov gave over the instructions that this man be allowed to enter his room at any time; no one was to limit his access whatsoever. It took only a short time for the grandfather to realize that the Chassidim were not the terrible people they were made out to be, rather they served Hashem with sincerity and awe.

"Nevertheless," he said to himself, "this is not enough for me to become a follower of the Baal Shem Tov. It is time for me to go back home." With great respect, he made his way over to the Baal Shem Tov to receive his blessings for his imminent departure. What he was about to see, would change his life forever.

At that same time a simple villager had come to the Rebbe to ask him a *bracha* for his daughter, who was deathly ill and the doctors had already given up hope. The Baal Shem Tov turned to the villager and asked, "Are you able to prepare a meal for me and the members of my *chevraya kadisha* (holy society)? If so, then we will travel to your town." The man replied that he was able to take care of this.

The elderly grandfather had observed this exchange and decided that he wanted

to go along on this journey. In the middle of the meal loud cries were heard from the room where the sick girl lay. Paying no attention to her agonizing cries, the Baal Shem Tov turned to her father and requested more *mashke*. This infuriated the grandfather so much, he was ready to harm the Baal Shem Tov, *chas v'shalom!*

A moment later a heart wrenching noise came from the room and it sounded like the girl was dying. "Come," said the Baal Shem Tov, "let us go see how the girl is doing." The Rebbe approached her bed and whispered something in her ear. Immediately afterwards she started moving and sat up in her bed.

The Baal Shem Tov turned to the grandfather and said, "It is good that Yisroel the son of Sara [referring to himself] did not make a mistake with his *kavanos* and was able to bring her *neshama* in the body. But even if not, should he be harmed for it!?"

The man fell to the floor in a dead faint. When he came back to himself he begged for forgiveness and subsequently became an ardent follower of the Baal Shem Tov. **T**

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