

TORAS REB KALMAN



סיפורי צדיקים

*Captivating stories full of Yiras Shamayim taken from Shmuessin that
Reb Kalman Krohn z'tl gave in Adelpia Yeshiva*

Simple Faith

Yonah was a simple-seeming Jew. He spent most of the day involved in farming or selling his produce, with a two-hour time period set aside for learning. He was a *yarei shamayim* who kept all the *mitzvos*, but did not stand out in any way for his *avodas Hashem*.

Yonah possessed one unusual ability: when he gave someone a blessing, the blessing would come true. It was astonishing to see. A poor man would come to request a blessing for a *parnasah*. After Yonah blessed him, his business would begin to prosper. A couple waiting for children, a spinster awaiting a match, a person in the throes of an illness; whomever Yonah blessed immediately saw their salvation.

The *rabbonim* in his town could not understand his secret. This was a simple Jew, not someone who spent his entire day engrossed in learning. Granted, he gave some *tzedakah*, but nothing out of the ordinary. What was his secret? How did he

possess an ability that even great *rabbonim* do not necessarily have?

Finally, the *rabbonim* decided together to choose one representative from amongst them to go ask Yonah directly about his unusual ability. Rav Dovid, one of the senior *rabbonim* in town, was tasked to approach Yonah.

When Rav Dovid knocked on Yonah's door, the man was stunned to see the great *rav* standing before him. He immediately began searching his mind. Had he done something wrong in the recent past? Why would the *rav* be on his doorstep?

"What did I do?" he asked, white-faced. "Did I do something wrong? Is the *rav* here to give me *tochachah*?"

"Not at all," Rav Dovid replied with a shake of his head. "Please, may I come in? There's something I want to discuss with you."

"Of course, come inside!" Yonah led the *rav* into his humble home. His main room was sparsely furnished with some old, second-hand furniture. Offering the *rav* the most comfortable and sturdy chair, he hurried to bring some refreshments.

He returned a few moments later, setting a plate of cake on the table and two cups of tea. Taking a seat opposite the *rav*, he waited expectantly for his guest to begin.

"I'll be straightforward with you," Rav Dovid began. "I am a *rav*, but I wish I was on your level."

Yonah was stunned. "I am not on any high level," he responded.

"You are a person whose word is fulfilled by Hashem," the *rav* pointed out. "That is not something that happens to an ordinary person. Tell me, what *mitzvah* did you do to merit access to the keys of all the *brachos*?"

Blood rushed to Yonah's cheeks. "Please, don't embarrass me," he told the *rav*. "I am a simple Jew with no extraordinary qualities. I'm not sure what the *rav* wants from me."

Rav Dovid pursed his lips. "Tell me. Are there any special *mitzvos* that you perform?"

Yonah shrugged. "I *daven*. I learn Torah. I give *tzeddakah*. I keep the *mitzvos* like every ordinary Jew. I'm not trying to be humble; I'm really nothing special."

"There must be something," Rav Dovid insisted. "Some special *mitzvah* you perform or a special way that you perform a specific *mitzvah*?"

"No, nothing," Yonah continued to maintain.

Rav Dovid saw he was getting nowhere with this general line of questioning, so he began to get specific. "Do you *daven* every day?"

"Yes, three *tefillos* a day, just like everyone else," Yonah said.

"Do you give *tzedakah*?"

Yonah nodded. "Yes, I give *tzedakah*."

"Do you have *emunah* in Hashem?"

This question finally elicited a stronger reaction from Yonah. "The *rav* reminded me of a story that happened about two years ago. Perhaps this is what the *rav* is looking for?"

Rav Dovid smiled. "Go ahead, let's hear the story."

"Around two years ago, I was sitting outside on the front porch, looking dejectedly at my bare fields," Yonah began. "The weather had not cooperated with the farming season, and there was nothing edible left to pick from the garden. As a very poor man, I had no money with which

to purchase food. We usually ate whatever we farmed from our garden.

"My wife came out to the porch, crying. 'What will be with our children, Yonah?' she asked. 'They are growing children. They need to eat. You must do something about this situation!'

"I understood her tears, but I wasn't sure how to respond. 'I am doing the best I can,' I told her. 'Our *parnasah* is in the hands of Hashem. I did my part, and the rest is up to Him. We still have some flour, isn't that right? You can bake bread, and our children will subsist on plain bread and water until Hashem provides more.'

"This answer did not satisfy my wife. 'They need more nourishment,' she informed me. 'I have an idea. Remember Tzvi, from the neighboring town? A few years ago, he wanted to take you into his business as a partner, splitting the proceeds fifty-fifty. At that time, you turned the offer down. Perhaps now is the time for you to take him up on the offer.'

"The reason I hadn't agreed to the partnership was because I know that most partnerships do not end well," Yonah told Rav Dovid. "It starts out amicably, but almost always ends in *din Torah*. I was wary of participating in something with such high odds of failure.

"But my wife pressured and pressured, and in the end, I saddled my donkey and prepared to travel. I still wasn't sure if I would end up at Tzvi's house to take him up on his partnership offer or if something else would come my way. All I knew was that I was making my wife happy.

"On the road, on my way to the neighboring town, I suddenly lifted my hands heavenward. '*Ribbono shel olam!*' I cried. 'Why are you pushing me into a *nisayon* I won't be able to withstand? It says in the Torah to be wary of a partnership; that one shouldn't place oneself in a venture that might later become an issue of stealing. *Ribbono shel Olam*, why are you doing this to me?'

“I stopped my donkey and sat there for a long time, crying and crying. Then I looked upward again. “Hashem from now on, You are my Partner. I am entering a business partnership with You. Whatever I earn, half will be for You and the other half will be to support my family.

“I remained in that spot, weeping my heart out, until I finally felt calm. Then, I mounted my donkey and turned around, toward home. As I rode, I realized that I would no longer have to work so hard to make a livelihood. Hashem was my Partner! I resolved to devote two hours of my day to learning Torah.

“When I came home, I planted new seeds and, very soon, began to see extraordinary success. I began earning double what I had earned previously, so although I was splitting my earnings with Hashem, my wife had no less money than before. As soon as I sold my produce on the market, I would immediately give half to local *talmidei chachamim*.

“Although the money I give my wife is not plentiful, and we still live very simply, our income is steady, and for that, we are both very grateful. She has what to feed the children with and what to cook for Shabbos. Our days of astute poverty are over.”

Rav Dovid listened thoughtfully, amazed by Yonah’s level of *emunah*. Instead of embarking on a business partnership, he relied solely on a partnership with Hashem and merited to see the profitable results. “But what about the *brachos*?” he asked.

“Shortly after I began this partnership, I met a woman crying,” Yonah said. “It was after one successful market day, just when I finished dispensing half my earnings to various *tzedakah* causes. As I walked home, I saw a woman crying. Concerned, I approached her to see if everything was okay.

“The woman’s eyes were red-rimmed, and it took her a moment to collect herself before she could respond. ‘My child is very ill,’ she told me. ‘We’ve just returned from a third opinion at a top specialist in the city, but he told us the same thing as the first two doctors we visited. According to the doctors, my child will not live.’

“I looked at the poor mother, the deathly ill child lying limply in her arms. ‘I have a business partner who is a brilliant doctor,’ I told the woman. ‘Surely he will be able to cure your child. Go home, and I will speak to my partner. I am sure he will be able to help you.’

“Grasping at the hope I provided, she walked away slowly. I returned home, took off my shoes, and layed down on the floor, my arms and legs outstretched. ‘*Ribbono shel olam!*’ I cried. ‘You are my Partner! I give fifty percent of my earnings to you! Please take care of this woman’s sick child!’

“I cried for a long time before standing up and putting on my shoes. It took me some time to find out where the woman lived, but a few hours after I first met her, I knocked on her door to see how her child was faring.

“She opened the door with tears in her eyes. ‘The color came back to his cheeks,’ she said excitedly. ‘His fever broke, and for the first time in weeks, he asked for water and something to eat!’

“That was how it started,” Yonah concluded. “This woman told her miraculous story to her friends, and very quickly I became known as the go-to address for all forms of salvation. What people should know is that this has nothing to do with me. I just have the right kind of ‘pull’ with my Partner, Hashem. It is He who cares for all these unfortunate people.”

Rav Dovid looked around at the aging room. As if reading his thoughts, Yonah explained, “I am content with the *parnasah* my Partner provides. I

ask Him for things that others need, but for myself, I don't need anything more."

Rav Dovid got up to leave, blown away by Yonah's pure faith in Hashem. The simple Jew with the simple *emunah* was not so simple after all.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

This story is taken from tape # A273

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