

# TORAS REB KALMAN



## סיפורי צדיקים

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

### *The Tosfos Yom Tov*

Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller, author of the Tosfos Yom Tov and other seforim, lived in the era of the Acharonim. He had a son, Reb Shmuel, a young man who took ill at the prime of his life. The Tosfos Yom Tov's suffering, as he watched his son wither away before his eyes, was incomprehensible.

Reb Shmuel lay weakly on a bed, covered by a thin blanket. His hands were frail, his face was sunken, and his pallor a sickly grey. A bowl of lukewarm soup lay neglected on the night table. The patient, even when spoon-fed, could barely eat. The air was thick with the stench of illness.

The Tosfos Yom Tov sat at his son's bedside, learning and reciting tehillim, as the young man flitted in and out of consciousness. The doctor,

who came to visit every day, was not optimistic. Reb Shmuel's condition was grave, and it continued to deteriorate. Gently, the doctor broke the news to the anguished father that Reb Shmuel's days were numbered.

The Tosfos Yom Tov increased his tefillah and turned to teshuvah as well. He began to mentally comb through all his actions. What had he done to deserve such a punishment? Which sin had he committed, which mitzvah had he neglected to fulfill?

People came in and out of the room. Friends and relatives came to visit the dying man. Reb Shmuel would sleep for hours and then suddenly awaken gasping for air, oblivious to the goings-on around him. His father remained lovingly at his side, trying desperately to understand the reason for his son's illness. If only he could rectify whatever he had done wrong! If only he could bring Reb Shmuel back to life.

Tears streamed down his cheeks as he sat with his head in his hands, feverishly searching his mind. He could think of a few reasons why Hashem would judge him deserving of punishment, but none of them were serious enough to warrant such a terrible sentence. There must be something else, he thought to himself. What could it be?

Suddenly, a lightbulb went off in his mind. It was his unpublished commentary that was the culprit of all this! Surely, the commentary he had been working on for several years and had finally finished was causing his son's illness.

At the time, the Tosfos Yom Tov had finally completed the manuscript of his life's work, the sefer Tosfos Yom Tov. This was a commentary on mishnayos, where he laid out various opinions of Rishonim and Acharonim, and in many instances, ruled against them. In particular, there are many cases in which the Tosfos Yom Tov's

commentary disagrees with that of the famous Rishon, the Bartenura.

Sitting at his son's bedside, the Tosfos Yom Tov suddenly realized that perhaps his arguments against the opinions of the earlier Acharonim and Rishonim were too sharply worded. Perhaps he had offended the honor of these holy Torah giants, and that was why he was being punished with the incomparable pain of seeing his son pass on before him.

In a flash, he made a decision not to publish the manuscript he had spent so many years on. He would destroy this assault to the honor of the Torah, and hoped that in its merit, his son would quickly recover.

The Tosfos Yom Tov added some wood to the hearth to make the blaze stronger and reached for the huge pile of papers that contained his writings. With tears streaming from his cheeks, he tied the pages together. He moved closer to the fire, ready to throw his life's work inside.

He glanced back at his son and his lips began moving. "Ribbono shel olam," he pleaded silently. "I am doing this for the sake of my son's complete recovery."

Suddenly, Reb Shmuel began to speak. "Tatte," he called out, his voice hoarse from disuse. "Tatte, don't throw it into the fire!"

Startled, the Tosfos Yom Tov's arm dropped. The pages of the manuscript fell onto the table as the Tosfos Yom Tov ran to his son. "Shmuel!"

But Reb Shmuel had already drifted back into a deep slumber.

The Tosfos Yom Tov hesitated. He had been sure that Hashem wanted him to burn the manuscript, but was now plagued by doubt. He looked from the roaring fire back at his son. Reb Shmuel was

still sleeping, but he had begun to sweat profusely.

The gemarah teaches that sweating during an illness is a good sign, a sign of the body fighting the toxins and getting rid of them through the skin pores. Watching his son sweat, the Tosfos Yom Tov understood that Reb Shmuel's illness had turned a corner. He lingered at his side a little longer, watching to see any progress.

A few moments later, Reb Shmuel opened his eyes. "Tatte," he said in a raspy voice. "Please, I need some water."

The Tosfos Yom Tov called for someone to summon the doctor as he brought his son a cup of water. With trembling fingers, he lifted the cup to Reb Shmuel's lips, and his son drank.

The doctor arrived soon thereafter and was astonished to see that Reb Shmuel was awake and completely lucid, though he was very weak. In the hours that followed, the patient who had been written off for the dead was strong enough to sit up in bed and speak full sentences.

The doctor instructed the Tosfos Yom Tov to wait until morning to try feeding Reb Shmuel any food, but he was clearly pleased with his patient's rapid progress.

The Tosfos Yom Tov remained at his son's bedside the entire night, watching his son's calm and rhythmic breathing in awe. Reb Shmuel slept deeply and peacefully, and the feverish mutterings that had accompanied his sleep during the weeks previous had noticeably disappeared.

In the morning, Reb Shmuel awoke feeling much better. Although he was too weak to come out of bed, he was able to eat a bowl of soup and conduct a conversation without falling asleep.

“My son, what happened?” the Tosfos Yom Tov asked him, putting down the empty soup bowl. “I was ready to sacrifice my commentary Tosfos Yom Tov, and at that moment you opened your eyes. That was the turning point of you getting better.”

“I’ll tell you what happened, Tatte,” Reb Shmuel said hoarsely. “I’ll tell it to you from my perspective during those moments.”

He leaned back limply on his pillow and began his story. “As I was laying here, weak and feverish, I fell into a coma, which is a state of semi-death, Reb Shmuel said, his voice low and weak. “I saw my soul disconnect from my body and rise heavenward. As soon as my soul arrived, a judgement was organized. The angels began weighing my mitzvos against my aveiros to decide if I was worthy of continued life.

“They placed many deeds on the negative side of the scale, deeds that would not have been considered sins if committed by others. However, as they kept on reminding me, since I am the son of such holy parents, my actions were judged on a harsher level, and even careless errors were counted as severe sins.

“As the side of the sins began weighing down the side of the merits, I began to understand that my death was imminent. I began pleading for my life, but the deeds on the scale spoke for themselves. My judgement was rendered: death.

“At that moment, a tremendous flash of light illuminated the courtroom and heavenly voices began to call out from all sides, “Give honor to the Torah!” I realized that someone great was entering the room.

“Moments later, I merited to glimpse the soul of the great Reb Yehuda HaNasi,” Reb Shmuel continued. “He had come into the courtroom and was questioning the judgement. The angels

explained that I was the son of the holy Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller, and as such, my sins carried extra weight. My death sentence had already been handed down.

“Reb Yehuda HaNasi deferred to the judgment that had already been decided. If my deeds were being judged at a harsher standard due to my lineage, he did not want to challenge that. ‘But did you weigh the merit of his father’s commentary on the Mishnah?’ Reb Yehuda HaNasi asked the angels.

“When the malachim said that they had not, Reb Yehuda HaNasi was astounded. ‘Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller’s commentary elucidates the Mishnah in such a clear fashion! The way he argues with the opinions of other commentaries, bringing solid proofs to each of his arguments! What bigger merit is there than true richsa d’oraysa, the battle for the truest understanding of Torah?’

“At that point, it was unclear if the angels would accept Reb Yehuda HaNasi’s arguments, but then the great tanna began to cry out in alarm. ‘Look!’ Reb Yehuda HaNasi cried. ‘Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller is about to burn this wonderful commentary! He believes that it is a bizayon haTorah, an assault on the honor of the Torah, and that is the cause of his son’s death! How can we allow this to happen? This commentary is not bizayon haTorah, but the most beautiful act of richsa d’oraisa! We must save the life of his son so that his commentary is not destroyed!’

“At that point, I began to grow hopeful that I would be allowed to live. Reb Yehuda HaNasi continued pushing. ‘Even if this man does not merit life, grant him life for the sake of the rest of the world! The world needs the peirush Tosfos Yom Tov! Grant him life so that it should not be burned!’

“And that is the merit in which my soul was restored,” Reb Shmuel concluded. “I immediately opened my eyes to stop the commentary from being burnt to a cinder. That peirush is so beloved in Shomayim. It is the only reason why I was granted life.”

When the Tosfos Yom Tov heard his son’s words, he was filled with a deep sense of joy. Not only had he received his son back, but his life’s work had also received heavenly approval.

Shortly thereafter, the manuscript was published into the famous sefer, Tosfos Yom Tov.

*Have a Wonderful Shabbos!*

This story is taken from tape # A101

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