

# TORAS REB KALMAN



## סיפורי צדיקים

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

### ***Black Feet I***

Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson was a tremendous gaon who lived a few generations ago. He was an extraordinary masmid whose mind never wandered away from his learning. He knew nothing other than Torah. It was well known that he could not hold a conversation that was not related to a sugya. His single-minded focus was legendary.

For most of the day, Rav Yosef Shaul would spend his time engrossed in his own learning, pondering the depths of the Gemara and meforshim, and writing his seforim. For one hour each day, he made himself available for the community and would rule on halachic matters that came his way.

One morning, Rav Yosef Shaul was sitting at home, writing, when someone knocked at the door. Predictably, he didn't even hear the knocking as his pen scratched across the page.

The knocking persisted, growing more urgent with the passing minutes, but Rav Yosef Shaul, focused on his learning, remained oblivious.

The rebbitzin, who guarded her husband's schedule protectively, usually ignored those who disrespected Rav Yosef Shaul's public hour, but the persistent knocking aroused her compassion. She understood that the relentless person on the other side of the door must be desperate, and so she went to see if she could help.

The man standing in the doorway wore simple clothes, his eyes clouded over by desperation and worry. "Yoel Mayer," he introduced himself. "Is Rav Yosef Shaul home?"

Yoel Mayer! The rebbitzin's face registered her surprise. R' Yoel had been Rav Yosef Shaul's chavrusah for many years, back when the two talmidei chachamim had been newly married.

"Come inside," she said hastily. "My husband is learning, but I'm sure he'll be happy to see you."

She left him standing by the door and crossed the room to where Rav Yosef Shaul was learning. "Yosef Shaul!" she cried. "Yosef Shaul! You'll never believe who's here! Your old chavrusah, Rabbi Mayer!"

Rav Yosef Shaul looked up, startled, dropping his pen mid-word. "Yoel is here?" he asked. He noticed his friend standing at the door and stood up. "Shalom Aleichem!"

The two old friends hugged warmly, not having seen each other in decades. "Do you remember what we were learning the last time we met?" Rav Yosef Shaul asked his guest nostalgically. "We were in middle of that difficult sugya..."

He launched enthusiastically into the sugya, bringing proofs and citing commentaries. For the next few minutes, he expounded upon the Gemara

with great passion. It took some time for him to realize that R' Yoel was not joining in, firing back his rebuttals with matching zest.

He stopped short and took a step back, regarding his guest thoughtfully. "What is the matter, R' Yoel?" Rav Yosef Shaul asked, concerned. "You aren't acting yourself. Where's your enthusiasm? Where's your fire? We used to scream at each other for hours, and here you are, just nodding along to everything I say!"

R' Yoel gave a half-hearted chuckle.

"Really, R' Yoel, what's going on?" Rav Yosef Shaul urged. "Your beard has become so white, while mine is still mostly black. Your posture has become stooped. I'm worried about you."

R' Yoel's face crumpled and he removed a handkerchief from his pocket to dry the tears spilling out from the corners of his eyes. "I'll tell you the truth," he said, swallowing hard. "Oy, how I remember the good old days, when we used to sit and learn for hours. We didn't know day, we didn't know night. People would come to remind us that it was time to daven, since we were so completely engrossed in our learning. Do you remember those days?"

"Of course," Rav Yosef Shaul confirmed. "Baruch Hashem, I'm still living those days. What a gift, to know nothing other than Torah!"

"After we stopped learning together, I had other chavrusos for a few years," R' Yoel continued. "But then I went into business, and I was very successful. I built a beautiful house for my family, and my wife had all the household help she needed. My children grew up in the lap of luxury. Baruch Hashem, I married off my eldest two children with relative ease."

R' Yoel blew into his handkerchief and struggled to contain his tears. "A few months ago, my third

daughter got engaged to a wonderful young man, also from a wealthy home. As with my first two, I committed to a large dowry before the engagement was finalized. Shortly after the engagement, however, a business I was invested in failed, and I began losing money. I threw more money at the problem, but ended up losing that money as well. In a short time, I lost everything I owned.

"When my mechutan heard about my downfall, he sent me a message that the shidduch was still contingent upon the dowry I had promised. He made it clear that if I were to breach my commitment to his son, the match was off. Rav Yosef Shaul, I can live a life of poverty if that is Hashem's will, but what will be with my daughter? She is supposed to be married in one month's time. If the shidduch is broken, her life is destroyed! What should I do?"

He put his head down on the table and his shoulders heaved with silent sobs.

Rav Yosef Shaul, the giant who never looked out of his gemarah, spoke up quietly. "You know I learn all day, and therefore don't ever collect money for tzedakah," he said. "But you are my chavrusah, and you are suffering. Tell me how much you need, and I will raise that money for you."

R' Yoel lifted his head and wiped his wet face. "It's an astronomical sum," he said in a defeated voice. "I was a wealthy man when I promised to give this dowry. I promised \$100,000."

The number meant nothing to Rav Yosef Shaul, who had never dealt with money in his life, but he could tell from the way his friend was speaking that it was indeed a massive sum. He shrugged. "The rich men know that I don't usually fundraise. They know that this is a one-time thing, and I won't be coming back to them for more money every day. I'm hoping that they'll

therefore respond generously. You go home, and I'll send you the money when I have it."

"Are you sure?" R' Yoel asked hesitantly. He, more than anyone, knew just how great Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson was, and he loathed to tear him away from his gemarah to fundraise.

"Of course I'm sure," Rav Yosef Shaul said firmly. "Just write down your address so that I know where to send the money."

As soon as R' Yoel left the house, the rebbitzen burst out, "Yosef Shaul, I can't believe it! Just one visit from an old chavrusah, and you are changing your whole mindset!"

Rav Yosef Shaul smiled. "I don't really have a choice," he explained. "R' Yoel was my chavrusah, and he needs my help. This is what Hashem wants from me at this time." With that, he returned to the teshuvah he was in middle of composing and continued from where he left off.

When he finished, he called his gabbai, a young man named Shimon. "Do me a favor, and call R' Meir Simcha here. I need to speak to him."

"R' Meir Simcha, the parnas hair?" the gabbai asked.

Rav Yosef Shaul nodded. "Yes, yes, please call him over right away."

Shimon hurried over to the palatial home of the community's devoted activist. "The rav wants to speak to you," he informed the philanthropist. "He asked that you come to see him immediately."

"I'll be right back," R' Meir Simcha said to his staff, quickly donning his coat and hurrying out after the gabbai.

When they arrived at Rav Yosef Shaul's house, they found the rav pacing back and forth, waiting for the philanthropist. "I'm so glad you came," he greeted R' Meir Simcha warmly. "Please sit down, I need to speak to you."

R' Meir Simcha sat down nervously, wondering what the illustrious rav wanted from him.

"I have a friend, a tremendous talmid chacham," Rav Yosef Shaul began. "We were chavrusahs for many years, and I can attest to his incredible diligence in learning. Over the years, he went into business and became very wealthy. Just recently, however, he lost all his money. His daughter is engaged, and if he doesn't come up with \$100,000 for her dowry, the shidduch is over. I promised to help raise the money for him."

"I am at the rav's service," R' Meir Simcha said, trying to hide his surprise. It was well known that Rav Yosef Shaul wasn't involved in anything outside of learning, including tzedakah. "Whatever the rav needs."

"Well, I would like to sit with you now and create a list of ten to fifteen wealthy men whom we can visit over the next two days," Rav Yosef Shaul explained. "I need men who can contribute significant percentages of the total sum. Can you help me with this?"

"Certainly," R' Meir Simcha agrees. "With the rav's permission, I would be glad to make my own donation toward this worthy cause. I would like to give a tenth of the sum, \$10,000."

"Wow, that is very generous of you," Rav Yosef Shaul said, thanking him. "Tizku l'mitzvos!"

They spent the next few minutes working on a list of wealthy philanthropists in the area. When the list contained twelve promising leads, R' Yosef Shaul stood up. "Are you ready to go now?"

“The rav wants to start right now?” R’ Meir Simcha asked. He had not realized, when he hurried out of his house after the gabbai, that he would be gone the entire day.

“If not now, when?” the rav quoted, donning his coat. R’ Meir Simcha nodded respectfully. If that was what Rav Yosef Shaul wanted, that is what he would do.

People strolling on the street stopped in disbelief when they saw the illustrious rav, wearing his fur-lined rabbinical coat and carrying his silver-topped walking stick, emerge from his home, accompanied by R’ Meir Simcha. Rav Yosef Shaul never left his house unless he was going to a bris, or chas v’shalom, a funeral.

Shimon opened the door of the carriage, and the rav and the parnas hair got inside. Then Shimon hopped onto the bench up front and whipped the horses. A few minutes later, they pulled up to the home of the first wealthy man on their list, a man called Sruli.

The gabbi jumped off the bench and ran ahead to inform Sruli of the great rav’s arrival while Rav Yosef Shaul and R’ Meir Simcha made their way, more slowly, out of the carriage. At Sruli’s front door, Shimon encountered a beggar already standing there, collecting money. “Rav Yosef Shaul is on his way,” Shimon cried breathlessly, stopping the beggar before he could even begin speaking.

Sruli jumped. “Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson?” he cried. “Just a minute,” he told the beggar, rushing back into the house. He hurriedly changed his jacket for his Shabbos one, and donned his Shabbos hat. Smoothing his collar as he walked, he hurried back to the door just in time to see the great rav walking up together with R’ Meir Simcha.

Rav Yosef Shaul noticed the beggar already standing at the door. “Please, take care of him first, and then we’ll talk,” he told Sruli.

Sruli nodded reverently. “How can I help you?” he asked the beggar, conscience of the fact that the gadol hador was at his doorstep and could hear his every word.

“I’m collecting for hachnasas kallah,” the beggar explained.

“Sure, sure,” Sruli said heartily, dropping some coins into the man’s cup. “Mazel tov and much hatzlachah.”

The beggar thanked him and turned around to leave, while Sruli focused his attention on his illustrious guest. Rav Yosef Shaul, however, was looking at the beggar, who had to pass him on his way out. It was R’ Yoel Mayer! What was going on?

R’ Yoel passed Rav Yosef Shaul as if he didn’t know him, and the rav did the same, though he wondered inwardly why R’ Yoel felt the need to collect. Hadn’t he assured the anxious father of the kallah that he would take care of the money?

Rav Yosef Shaul pushed the thoughts out of his mind and followed Sruli into his lavish living room. He refused the offer of food and launched directly into his pitch, explaining how his former chavrusah had lost his fortune and needed a tremendous sum to save his daughter’s shidduch.

Sruli listened attentively. “I’ll give the rav ten percent of what he is raising,” he said generously when Rav Yosef Shaul finished speaking. He removed a checkbook from his pocket and wrote out a check for \$10,000, signing it with a flourish.

Rav Yosef Shaul thanked him warmly and showered him with brachos. Then, he returned to

the wagon together with R' Meir Simcha, money in hand.

Shimon, the trusty gabbai, was waiting at the wagon, ready to drive them to the next wealthy man on their list. "Where to?" he asked R' Meir Simcha.

"Just a minute, just a minute," Rav Yosef Shaul said. "I have a kasha that I need to straighten out for a minute before we go on. Shh, don't move the wagon. I don't want to lose my train of thought."

They waited patiently while Rav Yosef Shaul thought in learning for ten minutes before he was ready to move on. R' Meir Simcha gave Shimon the address, and the carriage began moving.

When they reached the home of Yosef Chaim, the second philanthropist on the list, Shimon once again ran ahead to inform the wealthy man that Rav Yosef Shaul was visiting.

Yosef Chaim began trembling at the thought of the gadol hador coming to see him. He hurried to put on his Shabbos clothing and instructed his wife to set out her best pastries for their distinguished visitor.

From the wagon, Rav Yosef Shaul noticed a pauper making his way up the walk to the rich man's house, and he worried that his presence would detract from the poor man's cause. Not wanting the beggar to earn less from Yosef Chaim due to him, he asked R' Meir Simcha to wait with him in the carriage for another few minutes.

Yosef Chaim, however, had been warned by Shimon about Rav Yosef Shaul's impending arrival, and he came outside to personally welcome him. Bypassing the beggar with not more than a glance, he approached the wagon.

"Please, take care of the other man first," Rav Yosef Shaul requested, pointing to the beggar. "He was here first."

Yosef Chaim turned back, and noticed the pauper. "How can I help you?" he asked, trying to keep the impatience from his voice.

"I'm collecting for a poor kallah," the pauper explained.

Yosef Chaim nodded, and handed the man a few bills before turning back to R' Yosef Shaul. The rav returned his greeting and followed him into his house, his mind still on the pauper they had met outside. He had promised R' Yoel that he would take care of the money! So why was R' Yoel collecting for himself?!

Rav Yosef Shaul told the wealthy man about his former chavrusah and the predicament he was in. "Two wealthy men have already promised \$10,000," he informed him.

"I, too, will match that sum," Yosef Chaim said. "Let me write out a check for \$10,000 right now. And the rav should please come back here by the end of the day if he has not raised the entire sum. I will supply whatever is missing."

Rav Yosef Shaul thanked him emotionally, deeply moved by his pledge to complete the remainder of the money needed by the end of the day. Every moment was potential time for learning, and thus every moment was precious to him. Yosef Chaim's generous offer would ensure that he would not have to spend any time collecting the following day, and he was enormously grateful.

Rav Yosef Shaul, R' Meir Simcha, and Shimon returned to the wagon, but by now Rav Yosef Shaul couldn't think in learning. His mind kept returning to R' Yoel, trying to fathom what was taken place. They drove to the next house, which

was just a block away, and here, too, they found R' Yoel walking ahead of them toward the front door.

“Wait here a minute,” Rav Yosef Shaul requested of the other two men. He hurried over to his former chavrusah and addressed him a whisper. “R' Yoel! What’s going on? I thought we made up that I would fundraise for you. Why are you also going around, collecting a few pennies from each house? There’s no need!”

“You’re right,” R' Yoel apologized. “I’m sorry.” He turned around and began walking away from the wealthy man’s property as Rav Yosef Shaul watched him thoughtfully. Something strange was going on, but he couldn’t put his finger on it.

Ari, the wealthy owner of the elaborate mansion, was already waiting at the door. News of Rav Yosef Shaul’s visits to fundraise from the wealthy of the neighborhood had reached him, and he was ready. He had gathered his children and grandchildren, all dressed in their Shabbos finery, and requested that the rav give them all brachos.

Rav Yosef Shaul readily agreed, blessing each of them individually. He would be asking Ari for a lot of money, after all, and was happy to return the favor. When everyone had received a blessing, Ari turned the rav’s attention to the spread he had prepared and urged him to make a brachah in his home. Rav Yosef Shaul complied. Then Ari wanted to hear a chiddush, which Rav Yosef Shaul supplied.

After half an hour at Ari’s home, Rav Yosef Shaul finally managed to broach the topic he had come to discuss. “I’m raising money for a kallah whose father has lost everything he owns,” he explained. “I’ve already collected some 10,000 donations from others. Can I count on you to contribute the same?”

“I’ll give you twenty thousand,” Ari said magnanimously. One of his sons brought him his checkbook, and he wrote out a check for the full amount. “It is my zchus to contribute to such a worthy cause.”

Rav Yosef Shaul had now raised fifty percent of his goal, and Shimon turned the wagon in the direction of the next wealthy man on their list, a generous baal tzedakah named Uri. As the wagon rode up the steep incline leading to Uri’s home, they passed a beggar who appeared to be making his way to the same destination. It was R' Yoel, of course, still holding his flimsy tin can.

To be continued...

*Have a Wonderful Shabbos!*

This story is taken from tape # A375

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## סיפורי צדיקים

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

### ***Black Feet II***

*RECAP: When R' Yoel, an old chavrusah of the gaon Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson, was in desperate need of money in order to marry off his daughter, Rav Yosef Shaul uncharacteristically agreed to fundraise on his behalf. Though he was successful in raising significant sums from each wealthy man he approached, he kept bumping into R' Yoel collecting for himself, and this bothered him.*

Rav Yosef Shaul had now raised fifty percent of his goal, and Shimon turned the wagon in the direction of the next wealthy man on their list, a generous baal tzedakah named Uri. As the wagon rode up the steep incline leading to Uri's home, they passed a beggar who appeared to making his way to the same destination. It was R' Yoel, of course, still holding his flimsy tin can.

The wagon reached Uri's home long before Yoel did, and Shimon ran ahead to inform the wealthy

man of the rav's impending arrival. When Rav Yosef Shaul came up the walk, he was greeted warmly and invited inside. Twenty minutes later, he was holding another check for \$10,000 and shaking his host's hand in appreciation.

Just as Rav Yosef Shaul turned to leave, there was a knock on the door. Uri's butler answered it and invited the beggar, R' Yoel inside. As Rav Yosef Shaul passed R' Yoel, he whispered to him, "I'm going home now. I want you to come meet me at my house when you are done here."

R' Yoel nodded and the rav continued out the door. Before the butler closed the door behind him, however, the words of R' Yoel's appeal to Uri floated back to him. "...money for hachnasas kallah... have pity on a young bride... no money..."

Escorted by R' Meir Simcha, Rav Yosef Shaul returned to the wagon. Shimon jumped up to the driver's seat and twisted around to receive his next set of directions.

As R' Meir Simcha consulted his list, Rav Yosef Shaul noticed that R' Yoel was already leaving Uri's home. Since they were both heading to the same place anyway, he asked Shimon to offer R' Yoel a ride. "We're going home now," he told the surprised driver.

From his window, Uri watched the beggar climb into the wagon of the gadol hador. His eyebrows shot up, but then he shrugged and turned away from the window. It was just like Rav Yosef Shaul to give a beggar a ride.

R' Meir Simcha did not understand why they were going back to Rav Yosef Shaul's house if they had not yet reached their goal, but Rav Yosef Shaul shrugged. "I changed my mind," he said.

Shimon stopped the wagon in front of Rav Yosef Shaul's house, and the rav got off together with

R' Yoel. He thanked R' Meir Simcha for his time and efforts, and asked his gabbai to bring the philanthropist home.

Moments later, the rav was sitting inside across from his old friend. "R' Yoel, I don't understand this," he said. "I told you multiple times that I was collecting for you. I was willing to embarrass myself and take off time from learning to raise money for you, and indeed I was successful in raising tremendous sums wherever I go. You are collecting mere coins. Why are you troubling yourself so unnecessarily?"

R' Yoel placed his half-full tin can on the table. It made a clinking noise. "Rav Yosef Shaul, I want to tell you a little story so that you can understand why I'm doing this."

"Sure, go ahead," Rav Yosef Shaul agreed.

R' Yoel nodded, took a breath, and began.

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A few years after we learned together, I went into business. Since majority of my time was now occupied by financial transactions and fluctuating market prices, I knew I needed a rebbi to keep me connected to Torah.

I found Rav Yudel, an elderly talmid chacham who lived not far from me, and I chose him to be my rebbi. Rav Yudel was an extraordinary tzaddik. He would go to sleep at ten-thirty each evening and would awaken at midnight to recite tikkun chatzos. After weeping over the bais hamikdash for an hour, he would begin to learn with the energy of a lion and continued to learn until the following evening.

He spent so much time learning that most people didn't even know he existed. Somehow, however, I merited to get to know him, and he allowed me to learn with him on Friday and Shabbos. How

sweet those days were! Rav Yudel knew everything, from Bavli to Yerushalmi, Sifra, Sifri, Tosefta, Michilta. He was also well versed in the secrets of the hidden Torah. The breadth of his knowledge was unbelievable.

Over the years, he taught me kabbalah. He introduced me to a new understanding of avodas Hashem and I learned from him how to make the most of every single mitzvah. Rav Yudel was my rebbi in every sense of the word. He molded me, he shaped me, and everything I still have today can be credited to him.

Then Rav Yudel passed away, and my world crashed. I used to cry a lot, since I missed my rebbi terribly. Fortunately, however, I had written down everything he told me, and I made it my custom to learn one point that he had taught me every night before I went to sleep. Learning Rav Yudel's teachings offered me great comfort and helped me move on.

One day, I was learning something from Rav Yudel very late at night, and in the middle, my head dropped. I fell into a deep sleep. As I slept, I began to dream. I saw a light shining before me, coming closer. It was the most brilliant light I had ever seen, shining brighter than the sun. The light was so powerful, I almost couldn't bear to look at it. And in the light, I saw my holy rebbi, Rav Yudel, his face glowing.

In the next world, as we know, the neshamos shine according to the mitzvos they performed when they were alive. And my rebbi, who was a true tzaddik, was glowing brighter than the sun. From the tips of his hat, which was shining a prism of a brilliant color to the radiance of his face and the shine of his hands, it was obvious that Rav Yudel had been unbelievably holy.

My eyes traveled down to the his glowing tallis, from which a kaleidoscope of color was



emanating, almost blinding me. Then I noticed his feet. They were bare. They were black.

I was broken. I could not understand how someone as holy as Rav Yudel, who spent every moment of his time occupied in holiness, was now cloaked in a radiance that somehow missed his feet. How could it be that his feet were bare from ankle down?

In my dream, I asked my rebbi, “Rav Yudel, how can this be? Why are your feet black?”

Rav Yudel responded to me as follows. “I will tell you a secret, Yoel,” he said. “And the only reason I have permission to reveal this to you is because we learned so much Torah together in my lifetime.

“When I was niftar, my soul was brought to its final judgment,” Rav Yudel continued. “I was asked, ‘Were you honest in business?’ and I responded that I had never had a single business dealing in my lifetime. I had been focused entirely on Torah, and had never even come across the test of honesty in business.

“The bais din continued their questioning. ‘Did you fulfill the commandment to marry and have children?’

“This time, I was able to answer in the affirmative. I had, indeed, married and raised a family.

“The questioning continued. ‘Did you use all your limbs for Hashem? If you were occupied with learning Torah, you surely used your head, your eyes, your ears, and your hands to serve Hashem. But what about your feet? Did you use your feet to serve Hashem?’

“I was at a loss of how to respond. Did I, indeed, use my feet for Hashem’s service? The angels

tried to help me out. ‘Did you use your feet to go around collecting for another Jew?’

“I was forced to respond no. ‘I was always learning,’ I explained. ‘I didn’t have time to fundraise.’

“They didn’t like this answer. ‘What do you mean, you didn’t have time to collect money for a needy Jew? That is a basic chesed, without which you will not have entry into Gan Eden.’

“I was stunned. ‘What do you mean?’ I cried. ‘I devoted my entire life to Torah! How can it be that I won’t receive Gan Eden?!’

“At that moment, the hundreds of thousands of angels that had been created from the Torah I learned stood up to plead in my defense. They argued that they had been created from my mitzvos, and they didn’t deserve to go to waste. At the same time, the prosecuting angels were shouting that I wasn’t deserving of merit. ‘You didn’t help that suffering Jew... and that one... and that one. Your feet are black! Your feet are black!’

“I stood there in the middle, trembling, waiting for judgement to be rendered. At last it was announced that because I had so many more defending angels working on my side, all created from my mitzvos, I would merit Gan Eden.

“It was with tremendous excitement that I approached the fence surrounding Gan Eden, ready to gain entry inside. Alas, I could not find the door, the entry to Gan Eden. ‘Open the door!’ I began yelling, circling the high fence as I searched for the opening. ‘Open the door!’

“An angel approached me. ‘Reb Yid,’ he said kindly. “Why are you screaming? Don’t you know that Gan Eden has no doors? If a person merits entry, an opening forms for him. If not, he will not find the entrance.’

“I looked at him uncomprehendingly. ‘But I did merit Gan Eden,’ I told him. ‘I had my judgement, and my mitzvos won. I should be allowed inside.’ ‘He looked at me and gestured at my feet, which were black. ‘Look at your feet,’ he said. ‘It is obvious that these were legs which did not walk around to help others. Gan Eden is not going to let someone in who didn’t walk around to help another Jew.’

“‘So what should I do?’ I cried.

“The angel shrugged. “There is no way you can enter Gan Eden with feet as black as these. If you want you can go back down to the next world and be born again. Perhaps in your next gilgul, you will use your feet for mitzvos and chesed, and then you’ll merit Gan Eden.’

“I gaped at him. ‘I can’t be born again,’ I protested. ‘In a new gilgul, I’ll be tested once again with nisyonos. What if I fail those tests? What if I fall prey to sin and ruin everything? The risk is extraordinary!’

“The angels nodded in agreement. ‘We agree that the risk is great, but there is nothing else we could do. If you remain here, you will not be able to enter Gan Eden, but if you go back to the world and are born again, you risk falling.’

“I shook my head. ‘I am not going back down,’ I said firmly. ‘Please, on the account of my many mitzvos, can I please enter Gan Eden?’

“The angels looked at the long line of white malachim that had been created from my mitzvos, which were now cloaking me in shining color. ‘We will create a place for you to look into Gan Eden,’ they decided. ‘You won’t be able to go in, but you’ll be able to stand at an entrance, peeking in, where all the wonderful hasagos will reach you.’

“This was much better than nothing, but I really wanted my entire Gan Eden. I had toiled my entire life in Torah and holiness, and I wanted to enjoy every drop of what I deserved, but the angels refused. ‘Your feet are not allowed into Gan Eden,’ they explained. ‘How do you expect to come in to Gan Eden without your feet?’

“And so, without any choice, that is where I am now,” Rav Yudel explained to R’ Yoel in the dream. “You can’t imagine the agony of standing at the door of Gan Eden, seeing what is going on inside, and being unable to enter. If only I had used my legs to help others! I would be in such a different place now, receiving the reward that I rightfully earned.

“I received permission to come down and tell you this story,” Rav Yudel concluded. “It is my hope that somehow, my talmid will be able to atone for my mistake.”

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R’ Yoel finished his story. “Rav Yosef Shaul, when I woke up, my head was spinning. My holy rebbi had just told me, in the dream, that he was not being let into Gan Eden since he didn’t serve Hashem with his feet! At that moment, I made up my mind that I would never let a day pass without walking around to collect money for tzedakah. And since that day, I have done so, knocking on doors and raising money for poor Jews as a merit for my rebbi.

“I asked you, too, to join in this mitzvah since my daughter is a needy kallah and needs money to be married off,” R’ Yoel continued. “But that didn’t mean that I was planning on relinquishing the opportunity to use my feet to serve Hashem. The outcome of my efforts is not as important as the actual deed. Hashem decides how much money I will collect, but I need to use all my limbs to serve Him. I hope that in this merit, my rebbi will be allowed into Gan Eden.”

Rav Yosef Shaul began to tremble when he heard this story. After all, he was just like Rav Yudel. With the entirety of his time occupied with Torah, he had never used his legs to go around collecting before he undertook to fundraise on R' Yoel's behalf. What would be with him?

From that day on, Rav Yosef Shaul, too, undertook to do at least one chesed every day in addition to the tens of hours he spent learning, understanding the importance of serving Hashem with his entire being.

*Have a Wonderful Shabbos!*

This story is taken from tape # A375

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