

TORAS REB KALMAN



סיפורי צדיקים

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

Tipping the Scale

It was Motzai Yom Kippur. All the congregants had already left shul to break their fasts, but the holy *rebbe*, Rav Levi Yitzchok M'Berditchev, remained behind. Wrapped in his tallis, his face a flaming red, he retreated to his private study at the rear of the *bais medrash*. The minutes ticked by as he sat there, his expression solemn, lost in his thoughts. He still hadn't made Havdalah and eaten something after the long and difficult fast.

A close disciple, Rav Shmuel Kaminka, entered the shul a full hour after everyone had left and was surprised to find his *rebbe* still there. He took in the scene. Rav Levi Yitzchok was sitting at the table, still wrapped in his tallis, his eyes tightly closed. His cheeks were an unnatural ruby color.

"Rebbe, I don't understand," Rav Shmuel said. "Today was a tremendous day, and the *rebbe*

davened well for the *klal*. Hopefully, we merited *teshuvah* and will have a wonderful year. Everyone has long gone home to make Havdalah and eat something, but the *Rebbe* is still here, his face on fire."

Rav Levi Yitzchok looked up. "I'll tell you honestly. There is a terrible prosecuting angel presenting a case against *klal* Yisroel right at this very moment. How can I go eat when this is going on?"

"What happened?" his student asked. "What is it all about?"

"There were actually two stories that caused this," Rav Levi Yitzchok replied. "Both are concerning widows.

"There was a widow with seven children who lived on her own in a remote area far from the closest civilized town. In order to feed her family, she was forced to leave them alone for days at a time while she went into town to collect coins. Her tragic tale captured the hearts of the people she met, and they all contributed generously toward her needs. Soon, her purse was building with coins. It was time to head home.

"Since the journey was too far to try to accomplish by foot, the widow secured a spot in an open wagon shared by many strangers. The journey, which involved multiple stops to other remote locations, would take significantly longer than hiring a private driver to take her directly home, but the widow was committed to responsibly spending the charity that she had collected, and the shared wagon was her cheapest option.

"As the wagon bumped along from one stop to the next, it dropped off passengers and picked up new ones. At one location, a heavysset man got on, and he immediately noticed the bulging purse lying on the seat next to the widow. He eyed the purse greedily, already planning his theft.

“The journey dragged on. They rode over dirt roads and grassy fields, through dense woods and paved highways. As the widow watched the passing scenery, the man withdrew a small pocket knife and cut a small hole on the bottom of the sack. One by one, he slid each coin out of the purse and transferred them to his own pockets.

“After a few hours of traveling, the wagon reached the woman’s destination, and she disembarked, taking her purse with her. The wagon sped on, kicking up a load of dust in its wake. The widow began walking toward her house, anticipating the joy of her children when she arrived home.

“The children were weak and listless when she came inside, starving and cold, but they perked up when they saw their mother, offering her toothy smiles that made her heart lift. Her efforts had paid off, and now she would have enough money to purchase some basic food and firewood so that they would survive.

“With a happy sigh, she opened her purse... and stopped short. The purse was empty. Not a single coin remained. Tears pricked at her eyes as she noticed the hole that had been cut into the bottom of the purse. The money was gone. How would she feed her children? She collapsed onto her mattress weakly. All was lost. And within a few weeks, the widow and all her children died from starvation.”

Rav Shmuel gasped at the thief’s cruelty, at the terrible tragedy that had resulted from his greed. “And the second story?” he asked, still horrified by the first.

“The other story is also about a widow, but from a different city. This woman, too, was in need of money to feed her children, and with no other choice, she went out collecting. A Jew saw her and felt bad that a Jewish woman had to embarrass herself by sticking out her hand for food.

“He approached her, asking how he could be of assistance, and she explained to him that the family’s source of income had died along with her husband. ‘I need money to feed my hungry children,’ she said.

“The man’s heart went out to her. ‘Wait here,’ he said, and he ran home. Under his mattress, he kept a sack of coins, which he had carefully saved up over the years in order to marry off his daughter. ‘Take this,’ he told the widow, pressing the heavy sack into her hands. ‘This is for you and your children.’

“The grateful widow took the money, and the man was left without a dowry for his daughter. Yet he never regretted helping a widow in her time of dire need.”

“And now?” Rav Shmuel asked. “What is happening now?”

Rav Levi Yitzchok sighed heavily. “Now, both men have passed away,” he explained. “Both the thief and the kind man who gave the widow his savings. Each of them came before the heavenly court for their judgment.

“The first man, the thief, stood before the judges. White angels streamed in, carrying all his *mitzvos*, which they place on one side of the scale. Then the black angels came, bearing his *aveiros*.

“And then came more black angels, holding coins, which they placed on the *aveiros* side of the scale. These were the coins the man had stolen from the poor widow, causing her death. The coins were heavy, and they weighed down the scale until the bottom. The verdict was clear.

“In the meantime, the second man was brought before the heavenly court. His *mitzvos* were brought onto the scale, and they began adding up. Then the white angels brought in the widow, her children, her grandchildren, her home, her

property, and everything she had thanks to the money the man had given her.

“The scale was so heavy on the *mitzvos* side that even once the black angels began piling the man’s *aveiros* on the other side, it barely made a dent. The scale remained tipped in the man’s favor. He would be allowed into Gan Eden.”

Rav Levi Yitzchok looked at his *talmid*. “Right now,” he said, “There is an angel who is trying to argue that the way the judges rendered the verdicts wasn’t equal. Both stories had been about coins; one had stolen coins and one had given coins.

“Yet, in the thief’s case, they had used the coins on the scale, while in the other man’s case, they had used the widow herself, along with her entire family. The angel argued that it wasn’t fair to use people and property; those were significantly heavier than coins. The judgement had been rigged in the man’s favor.”

Reb Levi Yitzchok’s face took on the beet red color, signifying that he was thinking intently. “How can we answer this prosecuting angel? Yom Kippur may be over, but there is a terrible threat hanging over the man who had been so kind to the widow!”

Rav Shmuel Kaminka had a very sharp mind. He thought for a moment before responding. “Both stories may have involved coins,” he said slowly. “But what about the thoughts, the intentions of both men? In the thief’s case, his thoughts were solely about coins. He wanted the money. His sin, therefore, was all about coins, which is why it was placed on the scale.

“But what was the other man’s thoughts? He wasn’t thinking about coins at all! All he wanted was to support a widow, to get her back on her feet. He wanted her to be able to feed her children, to raise them and marry them off, to heat her home and pay her rent. And in that case, his mitzvah

was the widow and her children, her home and possessions. That’s what belongs on the scale!”

Reb Levi Yitzchok smiled at this cleverly simple reasoning, and he suddenly understood the meaning of what we say in *Yigdal* each morning: גומל לאיש חסד כמפעלו, נוהן לרשע רע כרשעותו. A wicked man is paid with wickedness. If his wickedness was coins, the coins will bring his downfall. But a righteous man receives kindness according to his actions. It’s not just that he gives coins, he gives a new life of joy with his coins, and for that, he is paid back.

In just a few days is Rosh Hashana, when Hashem will be judging us for our actions. He judges our sins according to our thoughts when we sinned, and the same goes for our *mitzvos*. How important it is to have the proper thoughts and intentions with each mitzvah we do, so that we will receive the most value for it at the time of our judgments.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!
This story is taken from tape # A226

TORAS REB KALMAN HOTLINE

Vaadin & Shmussen given by **Reb Kalman Krohn zt"l** are now available by phone.

USA **732.913.5616** or **718.557.7711**
E.Y. **02.313.6038**

Option 1: Vaadin given in BMG
Option 2: Shmussen given in Adelpia
Option 3: Captivating stories taken from shiurim

To receive Vaadin by email or for questions and suggestions call/text 609.807.1783 or email torasrebkalman@gmail.com

Toras Reb Kalman
Lakewood New Jersey
609.807.1783
torasrebkalman@gmail.com

Sponsored by:
Eli & Malky Friedman
Chatz & Leahle Schwab