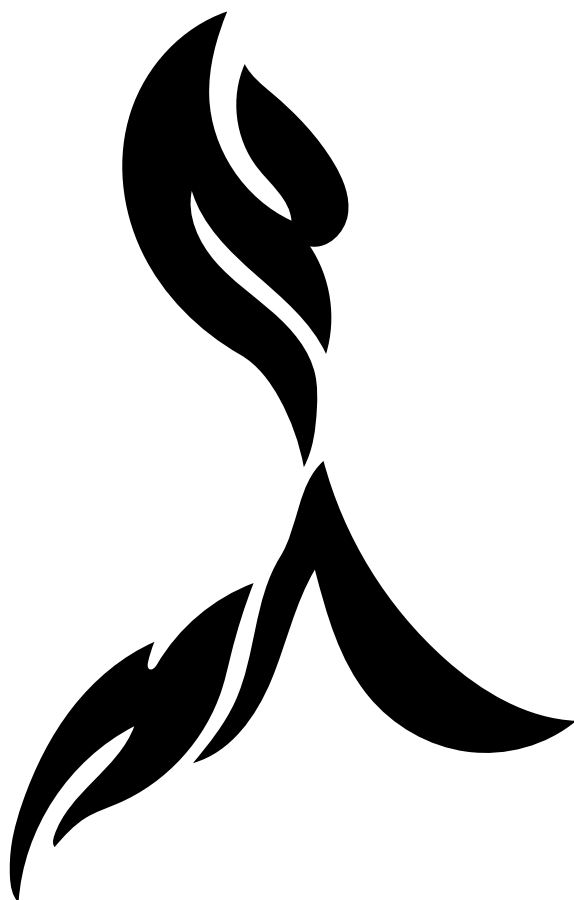


# THE KOZHNITZER MAGGID



A Memento (Teshura)  
from the wedding of  
**Mendel and Chayale Goldman, שידין.**  
8 Elul, 5784

# THE KOZHNITZER MAGGID



A drawing said to depict R' Yisroel Hopstein, the  
Kozhnitzer Maggid.

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## I. Introduction

In the annals of Chassidic history, few figures shine as brightly as the great R' Yisroel Hopstein, Maggid of Kozhinitz, one of the most prolific of the *talmidim* of the Mezeritcher Maggid, as well as a close friend and colleague of the Alter Rebbe.

Born in 1737 and passing in 1814, R' Yisroel served as a major link in the chain of Chassidus that had originated with the holy Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezeritch. Renowned as one of the founding fathers of Polish Chassidus, R' Yisroel's influence rippled far beyond the esteemed dynasty he established. His teachings and leadership left an indelible mark on the Chassidic world, shaping generations of followers and thinkers.

The *Kallah*, Chayale, is a ninth-generation descendent of R' Yisroel and his saintly wife Rebbetzin Roiza, through her paternal great-grandmother, Mrs. Hanna Tennenhaus (Faust) of blessed memory. This sacred connection not only looks to the past but illuminates the path forward for the new couple.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Rabbi Michoel Seligson, Rabbi Eli Schochat, Rabbi Mendel Gurary, Rabbi Bentche Korf, Rabbi Eli Matusof, Rabbi Eli Phillips, Rabbi Mordy Feiner, and Rabbi Yossi Lebovics for their invaluable assistance; To Y. Shaffer for organizing and translating the material; And, above all, to Rebbetzin Goldie Tennenhaus.

As we celebrate this joyous occasion, we pray that Hashem blesses the *Chosson* and *Kallah*, and all of *Klal Yisroel*, with a *Kesiva Vachasima Tovah, L'shanah Tovah Umesukah*. In the *zechus* of their holy ancestors, may their lives be filled with manifest goodness and unbounded happiness, *b'gashmiyus*

*ub'ruchniyus.*

May we merit a complete victory for Eretz Yisroel and Am Yisroel with the revelation of Moshiach, NOW!

Rabbi Yochanon and Leah Goldman

Rabbi Mendy and Endi Tennenhaus

## II. Biography

One Friday night in the year 1737, as the Baal Shem Tov sat at his table surrounded by his disciples, he suddenly burst into laughter. The unexpected outburst piqued the curiosity of his followers, but it wasn't until after Shabbos that they dared to inquire about its cause. In reply, the Baal Shem Tov took them on a journey. They traveled through the night and arrived in the town of Apt (Opatów). The Baal Shem Tov asked for a certain couple to be brought to him, Shabbetai the bookbinder and his wife Perl.

The Baal Shem Tov asked Shabbetai to recount the events of the previous Friday night, and he readily agreed: "I've always earned my livelihood by the work of my hands. Never have I accepted charity. But age has diminished my strength, and last Friday found me with an empty pantry and empty pockets. I was determined, still, to not ask for a handout. Better to fast on the holy Shabbos than to be a burden to my neighbors.

"When I came home from shul, instead of a bare table, I was greeted by my wife who told me that she had found an old jacket with buttons of some value. Hurrying to the marketplace, she had sold the buttons and bought enough food to truly honor Shabbos. I was overcome with such joy that I took her hands and began to dance around the table. We danced and danced..."

"You weren't the only ones dancing," the Tzaddik said.

"Your joy spread to the very Heavens; the holy angels above danced with you." It was this, the disciples realized, that had caused their master that sudden explosion of joy.

The Baal Shem Tov asked the couple if they had any

requests. They were childless, came the reply, and advanced in age. The Tzaddik gave his blessing. When the child was born, he was named Yisroel, after the Baal Shem Tov. He would become a major force in transmitting and spreading the Baal Shem Tov's teachings.

At an early age he was recognized as an *Ilu*, a prodigy, and he quickly amassed a wealth of Torah knowledge. He became acquainted with R' Shmelke of Nickolsburg, who later introduced him to the person to whom he would devote his life, the Maggid of Mezeritch.

His scholarship in the revealed parts of Torah was attested to later by the Vilna Gaon's foremost disciple, R' Chaim of Volozhin, no supporter of Chassidus. He was expert in all of *Shas*, R' Chaim said, word for word, and that included every *Tosafos*. As for the Torah's mysteries, by the time R' Yisroel met the Maggid, he had studied over 800 works of Kabbalah.

Upon meeting the Maggid, however, new vistas opened before him. Recognizing the young man's genius, his knowledge, and his saintliness, the Maggid asked that he work on an accurate version of the liturgy, the *Nusach Hatefillah*, according to the Arizal's teachings. His work later formed the basis for the Alter Rebbe's celebrated Siddur.

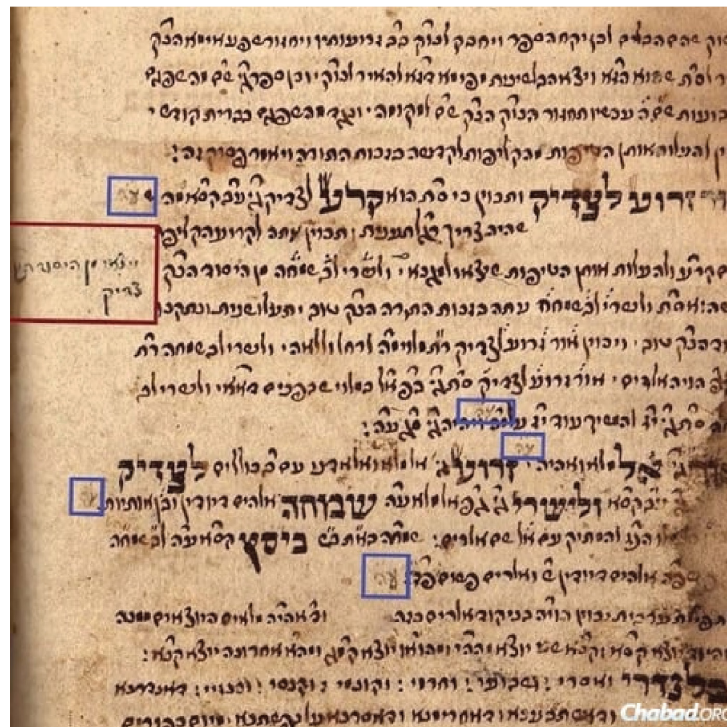
According to one account, the liturgy was the first topic they discussed. R' Yisroel had traveled for seven weeks straight, Chassidim would say, to get to Mezeritch. Upon his arrival, he was introduced to the Maggid by the Alter Rebbe. The Maggid asked him where he was from, to which he replied that he was from Kozhnitz, in the vicinity of Warsaw.

"Now," said the Maggid, predicting R' Yisroel's influence, "in Warsaw too, they will begin saying '*Keser yitnu lecha*' in the

*Kedushah of Musaf* (a practice based on the teachings of the *Arizal*). *Baruch Hashem*,” the Maggid continued, who has sent me someone who can edit the manuscripts of the *Arizal’s Nusach*. R’ Yisroel began to work immediately, spending ten weeks on the project.<sup>1</sup>

In 1772, the Maggid passed away. His mantle was taken up by his disciples. Chief among them in Poland was R’ Elimelech of Lizhensk, to whom R’ Yisroel immediately attached himself. The Alter Rebbe, in the meantime, was establishing Chassidus Chabad in the area of White Russia (today’s Ukraine and Belarus).

<sup>1</sup> *Hamaggid m’Kozhnitz*, pp. 31-32.



Siddur used by the Mezeritcher Maggid with notes written by the Alter Rebbe (in the large square on the left margin), and the Kozhnitzer (in the smaller squares).

From Chabad.org (Photo: Private collection/Courtesy 19kislev.co.il)



Among R' Yisroel's colleagues at the court of 'the Rebbe, Reb Meilach' were several other future rebbes, including R' Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, and the Apter Rav, author of *Ohev Yisroel*.

R' Elimelech passed away in 1787, and R' Yisroel settled in Kozhnitz (Koziénice), a town about midway between Opatow and Warsaw. There, he held the post of *Maggid*, or preacher. He was renowned for his scholarship and saintliness, but what stood out most of all was his *Avodas Hatefillah*. In Aryeh Kaplan's *Chassidic Masters*, the section on R' Yisroel is titled 'Master of Worship.'

In 1814, on the 14th of Tishrei, R' Yisroel passed away. He was succeeded by his son R' Moshe Elyakim and a Kozhnitzer dynasty which persists to this day.

### III. Literary Legacy

Even in the assemblage of giants that was the Mezeritcher Maggid's *Chevreya Kadisha*, R' Yisroel stood out. He was one of the most prolific writers in the group, his works spanning all genres within Torah, from Talmud and Halacha to Kabbalah and, of course, Chassidus. The works he left us include the following:

***Avodas Yisrael:*** A Chassidic commentary on the Torah and Pirkei Avot, encapsulating the Maggid's core teachings.

***Beis Yisrael:*** An extensive exploration of Talmudic wisdom.

***Chidushei Maggid Mishna:*** Innovative interpretations on the Mishnayot, offering fresh perspectives on the foundation of Oral Torah.

***Geulas Yisrael:*** A thoughtful commentary on the works of the Maharal of Prague, engaging with earlier Jewish philosophical thought.

***Gevuras Yisrael:*** An illuminating commentary on the Haggadah, enriching the narrative with mystical and ethical insights.

***Nezer Yisrael*** Commentary on the Zohar.

***Or Yisrael:*** Commentary on Tikkunei Zohar.

***She'eri Yisrael:*** Elucidations on Midrash, unveiling hidden meanings within rabbinic homiletics and narratives.

***Ta'amei Mitzvos:*** An exploration of the 613 commandments, offering spiritual and practical insights into Jewish

observance.

***Tehilos Yisroel:*** Commentary on the Book of Psalms.

***Yakar MiPaz:*** Commentary on the Torah, containing material not found in *Avodat Yisrael*.

***Agunas Yisroel:*** Responsa concerning the tragic case of an *agunah* who lived in the town of Stashuv.

***Remazei Yisroel:*** An elucidation of the *Sefer Hatemunah* attributed to the Tanna, R' Nechunia Ben Hakanah.

קלז

ב"ה יום ג' י"א אדר שני תקס"ה לאדי

חיים ארוכים אל כבוד ידיד ד' וידי"נ הרב הגאון הק'  
מופת הדור רב פועלים וכו' מוהר"ר ישראל מ"מ מק"ק  
קאזניץ יצ"ו.

אדשה"ט נעתרתי לבקשתו ושולח לו רצוף פה הפ"ג מכ"ק אדום"ו  
מאור הגולה המגיד הק' ולה"ה נכג"מ אשר נתן מידו הקדושה ליד  
קדשו של רבנו הגדול והנורא הבעש"ט נ"ע דכירנא עוד בחיותי

בבית נאווה קדשו של רבנו המגיד נ"ע בימי חורפי בעת שקבלתי  
הפ"ג במתנה מכ"ק איש אלקים וכו' מו"ה פנחס מקאריץ הראיתה  
לפני עיני טוהר רבנו נ"ע ואמר לי בזה"ל וואש חסידים קאנין  
דאש איז נאך דאש ערשטע וואש האב דער לאנגט דעם הייליגין רבין  
הבעש"ט ולה"ה עכ"ל הק' אבל אני איני נותן לכ"ק במתנה כי יקר  
ושוה עלי מכל הון דעלמא רק באופן אם ישלח לי כ"ק את הכתבים  
כאשר דברנו אז בידו הברירה. ועתה שלום מאדוה"ש וימיו ושנותיו  
יאריך ד' הטוב כנפשו ונפש או"נ דו"ש מלונ"ה בכל עת.

שניאור זלמן בא"א מו"ה ברוך ולה"ה

לכל המסתופפים בצל קדשו שלום וביחוד לידי"נ התורני מ'  
זעליג נ"י מדובנא.

ב"ה.

דובער בן חוה לישועה בגו"נ ולרפואה שלמה לחולי רגליו ולטהר  
נ'ר'נ' שלו בהמאור של התוה"ק ולאמונת חכמים באמת וחוש אותו  
ואת ביתו בכלל כל ישראל אכיר.

פ"ג ב' זהובים.

Letter from the Alter Rebbe to the Kozhnitzer.

## IV. The Kozhnitzer and the Alter Rebbe

Some of the warm regard held for the Kozhnitzer by the founder of Chabad Chassidus can be seen in a letter from the year 1805. The Alter Rebbe addresses R' Yisroel reverentially, with the title "*Kevod Kedushas*," roughly translated as "the honorable and holy." He calls the Kozhnitzer "*Yedid Hashem*" (beloved friend to the Almighty) as well as "*Yedid Nafshi*" (beloved friend of my soul).

The letter discusses the great *Tzadikim* of the previous generation, as well as a rare and holy artifact. The Alter Rebbe is sending his dear friend and colleague, he writes, a *Pidyon Nefesh (Pa"n)* that was given by the holy hand of their master, the Maggid of Mezeritch to *his* Rebbe, "*Rabbeinu Hagadol Vehanora*," the Baal Shem Tov himself. The *Pidyon* had been given to the Alter Rebbe as a gift by R' Pinchas of Koritz, and the Alter Rebbe recalls what the Maggid said upon the occasion.

He is sending the *Pa"n* as a loan, he makes clear, "I do not send it as a gift to *Kevod Kedushaso* since it is more precious to me than all the world's wealth." R' Yisroel had an option, however. There could be a holy barter. "If *Kevod Kedushaso* were to send me [certain] *kesovim* (manuscripts)...the choice is his..."<sup>2</sup>

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In Chabad Chassidus as well, we find citations to the Kozhnitzer's teachings. The Tzemach Tzedek's *Or Hatorah* discusses the *Avodah* of the *Kohen Gadol* on *Yom Kippur*. Ten times over the course of the day, he would sanctify his hands and feet by washing them. He would immerse in the *Mikvah* five times. The numbers ten and five are of supreme

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2 *Igros Kodesh Admor Hazaken*, p. 231.

significance:

**“The *Sefer Avodas Yisrael* by the holy rabbi R’ Yisroel, *Maggid Meisharim* of Kozhnitz, of blessed memory, explains as follows:**

**The 10 sanctifications and five immersions correspond to the Divine Name spelled *Yud-Hei*. The first letter of this Name, the *Yud*, symbolizes the *Sefirah* of *Chochmah*. The *Hei* symbolizes *Binah*. The five (*Hei*) immersions symbolize *Binah*, which contains within it the concept of *Mikvah* and of purity. The ten (*Yud*) sanctifications (*kiddushin*) correspond to the *Yud*, which is the level of *Kodesh*.**

**On Yom Kippur, the G-dly light of the *Yud-Hei* is revealed. For this reason, there is no eating or drinking. This level transcends the material world and its material needs. It is like the World to Come, in which there will be no eating or drinking. To reach this state, the *Kohen Gadol* would perform the five *tevilos* and the ten *kiddushin*.”<sup>3</sup>**

The theme is echoed in the Chassidus of the Rebbe Maharash:

**“With this we can understand why concerning the *Korban Pesach*, the Torah uses the term ‘*Isheh Olah*.’ After leaving Egypt, one must ascend (*oleh*) level by level, until reaching Yom Kippur, when the *aliyos* (elevations) are performed by the *Kohen Gadol*, a person who stands above even the *Kohanim*, who themselves stand above everyone else...**

**“Therefore, the entire service of Yom Kippur was performed by the *Kohen Gadol* (to the extent possible)...**

**“Thus, the *Kohen Gadol* would do ten *kiddushin* and five *tevilos*, the numerical value of 15, which is *Yud-Hei*, reaching the most sublime and elevated levels of sanctity.**

<sup>3</sup> Or *Hatorah*, *Vayikra*, Vol. 1, p. 293. See *Or Hatorah*, *Lech Lecha*, (Vol. 4), 732.

“After the elevations of *Yom Kippur* comes *Sukkos*, about which the Torah writes, “*Olah Isheh*,” pointing to the many *aliyos* that have led us there.”<sup>4</sup>

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A glimpse can be had of the Kozhnutzer’s regard for the Alter Rebbe and his Chassidus in the following anecdote:

“Every day, the holy rabbi, R’ Yisroel, holy *Maggid* of Kozhnitz, garbed in the *Tefillin* of *Rabbeinu Tam*, would study a chapter of *Tanya*.

“When the Stoliner Rebbe visited, he expressed surprise. Said to him the holy *Maggid*, ‘*Ich zog eich az der mechaber ken zogn Torah far Moshiach’n*. I tell you: this author can say Torah before Moshiach himself. *Der Tanya iz a sefer fun Gan Eden*. The *Tanya* is a book from the Garden of Eden.”

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4 *Likkutei Torah, Toras Shmuel*, 5631, Vol. 2, p. 278.

5 *Naharei Eish*, p. 213.

## V. The Kozhnitzer and Napoleon

In the summer of 1812, Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French and conqueror of most of Europe invaded the Russian Empire with 600,000 troops. Among the *Tzadikim*, opinions were divided. Some felt that this was a step toward the Redemption, especially since Napoleon would relax the physical condition of Russian Jewry, brutally oppressed by the Czars.

On the other hand, Bonaparte's agenda was profoundly secularist. He planned to actively assimilate the Jews under his rule. The spiritual threat was ominous.

The Rebbes that took the first view were led by R' Mendele of Rimanov. The latter position was represented by the Alter Rebbe. A famous spiritual 'contest' was held between the Alter Rebbe and an unnamed Rebbe in R' Mendele's camp. It was obvious that military victory would depend on which side would triumph spiritually. Rosh Hashanah was approaching. It was decided that whoever would sound the *Shofar* first would prevail.

Let us pause for a moment. Who was the other Tzadik in the story? Some sources said it was R' Shlomo of Karlin but he had been killed years earlier. The Lubavitcher Rebbe raised this issue in a letter and mentioned other sources that said it was R' Yisroel, the Kozhnitzer Maggid.

He woke up early Rosh Hashana morning, the story continues, hastened to the *Mikveh*, and rushed through the *hachanos* to *Tefillah* and the davening itself. About to begin the *Tekios*, he sighed, and put the *Shofar* down. "Ay, *Der Litvak hot shoin oisgechapt.*" The Alter Rebbe had arisen that morning and immediately began the process of *Tekios*.



## ה'תשעב

בי"ה, ימי הסליחות, ה'תשי"ז  
ברוקלין, נ.י.

הרב הגאון הגדול הנודע לשם תהלה ותפארת בתוככי  
גאוני יעקב, הרה"ח אי"א איש אשכולות ומדעים חו"י  
וכו' מוה"ר שלמה יוסף שי

שלום וברכה!

לקראת השנה החדשה, הבאה עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה ולברכה, הנני  
בזה להביע ברכתי לו ולכל אשר לו, ברכת כתיבה וחתומה טובה לשנה טובה  
ומתוקה בגשמיות וברוחניות.

בברכה,

**מ. שניאורסאהן**

המכ"מ מימי ט"ז כ"ב אלול וכן הסי' ספורי חסידים ח"ב נתקבלו. ות"ח  
ת"ח.

דרך אגב: רווח הנוסח דבר פלוגתי דאדה"ז בהנוגע למלחמת נפאליאן  
הי' הרה"צ וכו' מהר"ש מקרלין. וכן הועתק גם בס' הני"ל.

ואינו, ע"פ המובא בסדה"י שהני"ל נהרג על קדה"ש הרבה שנים לפני  
מלחמה זו.

כמדומה ראיתי מכבר באיזה ס' שהעיר ע"ז. וי"א שהבר פלוגתי הי'  
המגיד מקוזניץ.

בהס' ערכי קבלה — לפלא שלא צירף בו גם הסי' פע"ח. ומהנכון  
להשלים עתה עכ"פ.

## ה'תשעב

נדפסה בלקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 520 והושלמה ע"פ צילום האגרת.  
מוה"ר שלמה יוסף: זרין. אגרות נוספות אליו — לעיל ה'שס, ובהנסמן בהערות שם.  
בס' הני"ל: סיפורי חסידים ע' 208.  
ראיתי מכבר באיזה ספר: בית רכי ע' 90. וראה מ"ש בזה כ"הערות ובאורים" גלין תשטז ע'  
30.  
בהס' ערכי קבלה: בכת"י, שחיבר אחד מתושבי ירושלים, ונשלח לכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א ע"י  
הרש"י זרין.

And indeed, Napoleon's *Grande Armée* began to suffer heavy losses. That winter, over 400,000 men having fallen, the remnants of the army departed Russia.

Interestingly, in the chronicles of Polish Chassidus, the Kozhnitzer was said to be in the camp that *opposed* Napoleon. It is possible to reconcile the two versions. He may have begun as a supporter but later have been prevailed upon to change his mind. Indeed, one account credits R' Naftali of Ropschitz with persuading the Maggid to switch sides.

The story goes that R' Naftali first convinced the *Chozeh* to oppose Bonaparte. Having succeeded, he traveled to Kozhnitz. He arrived there on a Friday afternoon while R' Yisroel was at the *mikveh*. R' Naftali lay down on the Maggid's bed to rest. As we have seen, R' Yisroel suffered from ill health and upon returning home, made his way to his bedroom to lie down. The bed was occupied, however, and R' Naftali refused to get up, he said, until R' Yisroel promised to pray for Napoleon's defeat. The Maggid agreed.

That night, in *Kabbalas Shabbos*, upon reaching *Mizmor l'David*, the Maggid called out, "they say that the French have passed Moscow and are headed to Berezina. And I say, *"l'hishamdami adei ad... yispardu kol po'alei aven...v'Atah marom leolam Hashem!"*

The next morning, the Torah reading was *Parshas Yisro*. When the Maggid read the words "*Navol Tibol*" he declared "*(Navol) Napoleon (Tibol) tipol, will fall!*"

The Battle of Berezina would be a costly defeat for Napoleon's forces, who retreated from Russian territory in short order.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See *HaMassa Ha'acharon*, pp. 74-78; *Hamaggid m'Kozhnitz*, p. 144.

## VI. Selected Stories and Teachings

All his life, the Kozhnitzer suffered from poor health and chronic pain. Yet, it was never evident in his manner. Upon being asked how he could tolerate such agony, he replied that it was just a moment's pain that had to be withstood: "The past is gone, the future does not yet exist. All that there is is this moment. Can I not tolerate just one moment of pain?"

And yet, though he could sometimes barely stand, when it came to his prayers he had all the energy in the world. It was said that two of his Chassidim had to carry him to his place for prayer. He was too frail to walk himself. But when he began to *daven*, every physical infirmity disappeared. He chanted and sang, he cried out in devotion and danced, like a healthy and vigorous youth. Upon concluding the prayers, his aides had to be ready to catch him, so weakened was he by his exertions.

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A man came to him once who was known as extraordinarily wealthy and even more tight-fisted. The Tzadik didn't berate him for his miserliness but simply asked about his eating habits. "Bread with salt," the rich man said, echoing the Mishnah in *Pirkei Avos*, "rationed water." The Maggid expressed disapproval. "You must enjoy life. Fattened poultry and aged wine every meal, at the very least." The man promised to obey the surprising instruction.

To his baffled followers, the Maggid explained, "If this man eats meat and drinks wine, he'll understand that the poor need at least bread. If he suffices with bread, he'll assume that the poor can eat pebbles..."<sup>7</sup>

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7 *Hamaggid m'Kozhnitz*, p. 147.

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One Erev Pesach, a guest came to Kozhnitz. He had been abducted as a child, drafted into the Czar's army. He could barely speak Yiddish or read Hebrew. Invited to the Tzadik's Seder, he partook along with the many guests and Chassidim. The Seder night was a wonder of spiritual delight and soulful song. At its conclusion, the guest asked if he could sing *Chasal Siddur Pesach*. The man sung beautifully. Alas, his pronunciation was so poor that when he came to the last verse, "*Peduyyim l'Zion b'Rinah* (*Redeemed to Zion*), he misread 'peduyyim' as the Russian word, 'padyom', which means 'let's go.'

"*Padyom l'Zion!*" he sang, and sang it again; "Let us go to Zion!" He continued his joyous song as he walked toward the door. The Maggid rose, and declared, "We are ready! Let us go to Zion, us and all of Israel!" He put on his coat and took his cane as he walked toward the door, the Chassidim following, singing and dancing. But when they stepped outside the man was gone, just his voice was heard, still singing, growing fainter..."*Padyom l'Zion, Padyom l'Zion...*"<sup>8</sup>

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"*Olam Haze*h," he once said, *iz nisht k'dai az m'zol vegn'n ir krechtz'n*, it's just not worth our sighs."<sup>9</sup>

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"I am not *gashmiyus*, but *ruchiniyus*," he once told his disciples. "But we see *gashmiyus*," said his listeners. "Because \_\_\_\_\_ you are looking with *gashmiyus*."<sup>10</sup>

8 *Hamaggid m'Kozhnitz*, p. 149.

9 Told by R' Melech Tzwiebel at a *farbrengen*.

10 Told by R' Melech Tzwiebel at a *farbrengen*.

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The Maggid penned many volumes filled with serious scholarship. But the stories also tell of a twinkle in his eye, humor that lifted the spirits of all around him.

A couple came before him, on the cusp of divorce. “She knows how much I like kugel,” the aggrieved husband cried. “When I come home from shul on Shabbos I am starving, and can’t wait for the kugel. But she makes me wait until she’s served the fish course, then the meat. In my yearning for kugel, I can barely enjoy any of the other food. It isn’t until the very end of the meal that she finally serves it.”

“This is the custom of my father’s house and his fathers before him,” the wife responded, precisely matching her husband’s aggrieved tone. “Kugel is served at the end of the meal! *Minhag Yisroel Torah hi*. Our customs are sacred and I will not abandon them, even if he threatens divorce!”

The Maggid issued his ruling: “From now on, there will be two kugels. One will be served at the meal’s start, the other at the end.” Marriage and *minhag* would both survive. Word spread quickly of the “*Shalom Bayis Kugel*,” and thus a new custom was born, one that persists in some households to this day...<sup>11</sup>

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And on the subject of kugel...

The Maggid’s wife, the holy Rebbetzin Roiza, would often field complaints that her kugel lacked taste, that it needed more *schmaltz*. She felt that it had quite enough *shmaltz*, and when members of the household took the law into their own hands, adding *shmaltz* surreptitiously, she locked it in

11 Hamaggid m’Kozhnitz, p. 144.

a pantry and kept the key in her apron pocket. An already difficult *Golus* grew even darker that day.

But Rebbetzin Roiza was a saintly woman. When she prayed, she was transported to the Heavenly realms, utterly oblivious to her surroundings. It was easy, then, for her husband to slip the key out of her pocket. *Shmaltz* was added to the kugel and the key returned to her pocket before she finished *davening*.

That night at the Yom Tov meal, praise poured forth about the kugel. The guests couldn't get enough. "You see?" she said to her husband, "you tell me the kugel doesn't have enough *shmaltz* but look at how everyone is enjoying it!"

The tzaddik looked at her lovingly: "Yes, my dear. And it is in the merit of your *tefillos* and my *ma'asim tovim*."

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R' Dovid, Rav of the town of Pidhaitsi in Galicia, was the son of the great scholar Rabbi Aryeh Leib Heller, author of the classic "Ketzos Hachoshen" and "Avnei Miluim." When the Rav tried selling the latter work, however, he ran into difficulties. His father had not been a supporter of the Chassidic movement, and neither was he. Chassidim were therefore not eager to purchase the sefer.

He spoke of his distress to a chossid he met, who advised him to travel to Kozhnitz and speak to the holy Maggid, author of "Avodas Yisroel," asking that he write to his Chassidim urging them to assist. "He will buy the sefer from you and give you honor, and that will lead his Chassidim to do the same." The chossid added his own request: "Ask the Maggid to bless me with a child..."

R' Dovid did as he was advised, and indeed the Maggid

received him warmly, buying the sefer and writing a letter recommending that Chassidim buy it as well. After leaving Kozhnitz, R' Dovid realized that he had not conveyed the chossid's request. He immediately returned and told the Maggid what had happened.

The holy Maggid posed a question: "There is an angel appointed over pregnancy; his name has the numerical value of 75. Where is this alluded to in the Torah?"

The rabbi cited a passage in *Maseches Niddah*: "Rabbi Chanina bar Pappa said: 'That angel that is appointed over conception is called Night (*lailah*).' The gematria of the word '*laila*' is 75."

"You have spoken well," said the Maggid, "but the source you cite is from a place of darkness (night). I will show you a source from a place of light. In Parshas Lech Lecha, when the angel tells Hagar that she will have a child, he uses the term '*Hinach harah*' (You will become pregnant). The gematria of the word '*hinach*' is 75..." and the Maggid gave his blessing for a son. And so it was.

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The esteemed Tzaddik, R' Michel Zlochover, once set out to write a Sefer Torah. Upon hearing this, R' Yisroel of Kozhnitz crafted wooden *Atzei Chaim* and sent them to R' Michel.

By the time they arrived, however, R' Michel's students had already fashioned a set of silver *Atzei Chaim*. Though R' Michel used the silver set, he declared that the wooden set from the Kozhnitzer would one day be used by great *Tzaddikim*.



The Rebbe holding his Sefer Torah.

Indeed, the wooden *Atzei Chaim* eventually came into the possession of the renowned Slavita brothers. These brothers, known for their extraordinary *mesiras nefesh*, had been imprisoned and had a Sefer Torah written in separate sections during their incarceration. Upon their release, they sewed the pieces together and mounted the scroll on the Kozhnitzer's *Atzei Chaim*.

This special Sefer Torah was passed down through the brothers' family until 5714 (1954), when R' Shmuel Abba Schapiro, a descendant of the brothers and a relative of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, sent the Sefer Torah to the Rebbe. The small Sefer Torah became a constant companion to the Rebbe throughout the decades of his leadership. The image of the Rebbe dancing with his Sefer Torah during *Hakafos* is etched indelibly in the minds of all who witnessed it.<sup>12</sup>

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“Should all of Israel join hands in harmony, their outstretched hands would form a bridge reaching the very Throne of Glory, the *Kisei Hakavod*.”<sup>13</sup>

12 From ‘The Rebbe’s Sefer Torah’, *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei, 5773.

13 *Hamaggid m’Kozhnitz*, p. 145.



## ב'ק"ח

ב"ה, כ"ט אייר, תשי"ג  
ברוקלין.

הרה"ג הרה"ח אי"א נו"נ עוסק בצ"צ  
מוה"ר אפרים אליעזר שי הכהן

שלום וברכה!

נזדמן לידי ספר זכותא דאברהם מהרב ארי' מרדכי רבינוביץ –  
ירושלים תשי"א – ומצאתי שם בעמוד כ"ט, סיפור המעשה מהרב  
המגיד דקאזניץ אודות מלאך הממונה על הריון, שכתב כתי"ר שי מאז,  
ובאשר אין שמחה כהתרת הספיקות, הנני מעתיק בזה לשונו בהנוגע  
למה שהי קשה לי בהסיפור, וע"פ נוסחא זו מיושב הצ"ע שלי.

מכ' מכ"ו קבלתי קודם נסעי על הציון הק'.

בענין בעומר-לעומר יעוין אגה"ק סי"ג.

בכבוד וברכת ש"ק.

... ואמר לו המגיד הקדוש כי המלאך הממונה על הריון בגימט'  
ע"ה יאמר לי מעכ"ת אי' נרמז דבר זה. והשיב הרב מפדהייץ להמגיד  
הקדוש שמבואר בגי' נדה ט"ז ע"ב דמלאך הממונה על הריון לילה שמו  
שנאמר – איוב ג – והלילה אמר הורה גבר ובגימט' של לילה הוא ע"ה  
– והשיב המגיד הקדוש יפה אמר כבודו אבל הוא במקום חשך אני  
אגיד לו ממקום אור ולא חשך, בפ' לך כתוב שהמלאך אמר להגר, "הנך"  
הרה וילדת בן, "הנך" בגימט' ע"ה וכיון שהנך בגימט' ע"ה, ע"כ יפקד  
האיש בן זכר.

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ב'ק"ח

מוה"ר אפרים אליעזר שי: יאלעס. אגרות נוספות אליו – לעיל איתחצג, ובהנסמן בהערות שם.

Letter from the Rebbe to R' Ephraim Yolles discussing the story of the  
Kozhnutzer and the name of the angel appointed over hirayon.

### אִתְחַקֵּמַט

ב"ה, כ"ב כסלו, תשי"ג  
ברוקלין.

הרה"ג והרה"ח אי"א נו"נ עוסק בצ"צ  
מוה"ר אפרים אליעזר שי' הכהן

שלום וברכה!

בהמשך למכתבי הקודם [ו]למה שאמרתי לכת"ר שי' בע"פ בנוגע  
להסיפור מהמגיד מוהר"י מקאזניץ זצ"ל, שמסופר שם ששאל על שם  
מלאך הממונה על ההריון ונמצא עדי"ז בספר ישן של קבלה.

הנה בנוסח זה צע"ג, כי מפורש הוא בש"ס (נדה טז, ב) ובזהר ח"א  
(צא, ב) אשר לילה שמו והוא מהפסוק המובא ג"כ בהסיפור ולילה אמר  
הורה גבר, ועתה נראה לי אשר אנב שיגרא דלישנא דש"ס בא נוסח  
הנ"ל וצ"ל שם המסוגל או השייך להריון, כי תכ"ה הוא שם השמיני  
[מ]שמות הידועים היוצאין[ם] משלשת הכתובים ויסע ויבא ויט (בשלח  
יד, יט"א) ונרמז ג"כ בכמה פסוקים וכמובא בספרי הקבלה ונקבצו  
בקחלת יעקב מערכת כה"ת ומערכת תכ"ה, אשר ע"פ נוסח זה הרי אף  
שנשאר עדיין בצ"ע מענה בנו של בעל קצוה"ח שאמר ששייך להכתוב

### אִתְחַקֵּמַט

מוה"ר אפרים אליעזר: יאלעס. אגרות נוספות אליו – לעיל איתחצג, ובהנסמן בהערות שם.  
למכתבי הקודם: איתחקמ.  
לילה שמו: ראה לקמן אגרות ב"מ. ביקוח.

Follow-up letter on the same topic.

## VII. Rabbi Mordechai Yehuda Leib Faust

A great-grandson of the holy Kozhnutzer, and distinguished in his own right, Rabbi Markus Faust was the *Kallah's* great-great-great-grandfather.

He was remembered by his community as a man who knew all of *Shas* by heart, and known for his zeal in performing mitzvos *b'hiddur*. When his grandson Joe Faust (Chayale's great-great-uncle) was a boy, his illustrious grandfather was already in his 90's and blind. Joe would stop by his house on the way to school and help him with the words of the long "*Vehu Rachum*" recited on Monday and Thursday mornings. He knew the Talmud by heart but did not want to rely on his memory when it came to the prayers.

Joe was also surprised to see him pray from a *Nusach Sefarad* siddur. Even after many decades as a rabbi of an *Ashkenaz* shul, he had never forgotten his Chassidic upbringing in Poland.

Below is some information about this person of quiet greatness, as well as several newspaper articles.

Rabbi Mordechai Leib Faust (possibly a variation of R' Yisroel's last name, Hopstein), was born May 2, 1834 in Stawiszyn, in the Kalisz district of Greater Poland Voivodeship, and passed away May 5, 1932 in Fürth, after serving there as *Klausrabbiner*. He was married to Chaje Faust, née Krause (November 13, 1840 - July 25, 1915).

According to a file card from the Fürth city administration directorate, Faust celebrated his 95th birthday in Fürth on May 2, 1929, and was at that time the oldest citizen of the city of Fürth. Mayor Dr. Wild conveyed the city council's congratulations on his birthday. It was also learned that



Rabbi Mordechai Yehuda Leib Faust

Faust had received his *Semicha* at the age of 18. He first served as a rabbi in Kalisz/West Prussia, then in Pleschen and Posen, as well as a substitute for Rabbi Dr. Sandburg in Gollantsch in the Bromberg administrative district, before settling in Fürth.

According to extant records, Rabbi Faust came to Fürth around 1886, other sources mention July 19, 1888. By his own account, Faust was a great-grandson of the “well-known miracle rabbi of Kosnitz” (the Koschnitzer Maggid), who had predicted Napoleon’s downfall in Russia.

By the late 1920s, he was not only the oldest citizen of Fürth but also the oldest living rabbi, having served for over 42 years at the Klaus synagogue in addition to the three

years spent at other posts. Until the end, Faust studied the Talmud and climbed the steep stairs of the Synagogue. In 1932, he died at home at the age of 98 from heart failure and is buried in the New Jewish Cemetery in Fürth. The memorial book of the Klaus Synagogue recorded that he was in full possession of his mental faculties until his death. This entry was the last in the memorial book of the Klaus Synagogue.

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*“A crown of beauty is the gray head; it is found on the path of righteousness” (Mishlei, 16:31).* Rarely has this wisdom been more fulfilled in life than with the highly respected and revered Reb Mordche Faust, the rabbi of our old Fürth Klaus, who is esteemed by all sides in our community.

G-d has given him the fortune to celebrate his 95th birthday on the day after the Passover festival, quietly, in his modest home, behind his old, thick folios, which he actually no longer needs - he masters their entire content clearly and by heart with his prodigious memory.

To consider his work and deeds is to see a life filled with righteousness and devotion to duty pass before us.

*Torah, Avodah, and Gemilas Chassadim* are the three jewels in the crown of beauty that old age has placed on his noble head. A tireless researcher and teacher, delving deep into the sea of Torah, versed in all its branches and gladly giving of it to anyone who seeks to draw from this well. Along with this, he possesses a rare *Yiras Shamayim*. Our community rejoices that, within its walls, this great man of the old school has been honored with this crown of age. May G-d extend his years to 120.”

(“*Der Israelit*,” May 3, 1929)



Rabbi Mordechai Yehuda Leib & Chana Faust

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Probably the oldest living *Klausrabbiner*, Markus Faust, Blumenstraße 25, was able to celebrate his 95th birthday on Friday, May 3. At the same time, probably the most senior citizen of Fürth, he still enjoys great mental and physical freshness, still carries out his activities in his accustomed manner, and takes the most lively interest in all world events and Talmudic research. May he continue to have a healthy and hopefully long evening of life.”

(*Bayerische Israelitische Gemeindezeitung*,” May 15, 1929)

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*Klausrabbiner* Markus Faust, who, as we have already reported, recently celebrated his 95th birthday, did not expect in his well-known seclusion that he would be given such great honors.

Lord Mayor Dr. Wild personally congratulated Rabbi Faust on behalf of the city council, presenting a floral arrangement. Chancellor Hermann Müller conveyed his warmly worded wishes by telegram. The clergy of all denominations honored the jubilarian in a special way, partly in person, partly in writing. The President of the Middle Franconia District Government conveyed his congratulations in writing on behalf of the same, as well as



The Kallah's great-great-grandparents,  
Rabbi Raphael Reuven and Adele (Aydel) Faust  
HY"D



the Law-Abiding Rabbinical Association of Germany, the General Rabbinical Association of Germany, the Higher Regional Court Councilor Dr. Alfred Neumeyer.

Council President of the Association of Bavarian Israelite Communities presented a gift, as did the board of the Klaus Synagogue. The members of parliament H.H. Eberhard and Eisenbeis personally honored the jubilarian. Countless other congratulations arrived from near and far.

May the jubilarian remain with his relatives and his community for many more years in his previous mental and physical freshness. (All the best) until 100.”

(“*Der Israelit*,” June 6, 1929)

“*Yaakov Avinu lo meis*, Our father Jacob did not die.” This well-known Talmudic passage can be fully applied to Rabbi Mordechai Faust - may the memory of the righteous be a blessing -, whose first *Yahtzeit* was *Erev Rosh Chodesh Iyar*. Descending from a famous rabbinical family, he was introduced to the Torah at the tenderest age, and as a youth, he studied at the yeshivos with a rare zeal almost day and night, becoming a Torah scholar of great magnitude at a young age.

At 18, he was honored with his first *Semicha*. Over the years, a series of other *Semichos* followed. And as he had seen with the great masters, he too literally “studied day and night”; the study of Torah was his life’s work. Where it was necessary to spread Torah, Faust knew no bounds, and therein lay his wonderful greatness, his great humility, to study and work in such a way that was almost entirely unknown to the general public.

Nevertheless, the number of his students is large, many of whom work or worked as rabbis. As a rabbi in Kalisch, Pleschen, Gollantsch, and lastly in Fürth, Faust used every opportunity to spread Torah. In the observance of *Mitzvos*, the slightest *Minhag* was as important to him as the holiest



*Mitzvah.*

Faust was a scholar of the old school, and whoever came to him did not leave without having heard a word of Torah from his mouth and having received a ray of goodness and love from his meaningful presence. May his merit stand by us all in difficult times. May his soul be bound up in the bond of life.”

(“*Der Israelit*,” May 4, 1933)

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We are informed: On May 2, 29 Nisan, is the anniversary of Rabbi M. L. Faust - may the memory of the righteous be a blessing. Students and admirers of the deceased in all parts of the world who want to study Mishnah on the anniversary day are informed that the name was: Rabbi Mordechai Yehuda Ben Beila.”

(“*Der Israelit*,” April 17, 1935)



Gravestone of Chana Faust

## ADDENDUM:

**The Maggid and the Sleeve**

*(Reprinted with the kind permission and assistance of 'A Chassidisher Derher' magazine).*

The small waiting room was filled with people. They hailed from many cities and villages, yet all came for the same reason: to seek the advice and blessing of the great tzaddik, the Maggid of Koznitz. Among them were a man and woman, their clothes dusty from their long travel. Soon, the shammash beckoned and they entered the room of the saintly Maggid.

The woman was an agunah—a “living widow.” Her husband had disappeared without a trace many years before. She had travelled to the Maggid, accompanied by her brother, hoping that the Maggid with his ruach hakodesh would be able to locate her husband, and she would finally be able to receive a get and be free to remarry.

After hearing them out, the maggid called for his attendant. “Bring a bowl of water”, he said. When the meshares returned with the water, the Maggid addressed the woman, “Look into the water, and tell me what you see.” She gazed into the water, and a surprised look came to her face. “I see a big city, with many houses laid along busy streets,” she said. “Look at the marketplace,” instructed the Maggid. “I see a bustling market; shops and stalls line the street, and throngs of people coming and going; buying, selling, and trading,” said the agunah. “Look into the windows of the buildings along the street”, instructed the Maggid. “As the woman did so, her face suddenly paled and she cried out in shock. “I see my husband!” she exclaimed. “He is working in a tailor’s shop, surrounded by assistants. He’s holding the

sleeve of an ornate coat as he irons out its wrinkles.”

“Take the sleeve out of his hand,” said the Maggid. Without a moment’s hesitation, the woman reached her hand into the bowl. To the shock and surprise of those watching, her hand came up holding the sleeve, still warm from the iron that had been pressed against it a moment ago. The open miracle that the Maggid had just performed left a deep impression on all those present. “Guard this sleeve carefully,” cautioned the Maggid. “Leave in peace,” he told them. “You will have your get yet today,” he assured the woman. “Which way should we go? Where should we travel?” they asked. “Wherever you wish,” answered the Maggid. “How will we be able to hire a coach?” they asked. “The driver will certainly want to know our destination, and we have no answer.” “Go in peace,” said the Maggid. “Hashem, in His goodness and mercy, will take care of everything. All will be well, with Hashem’s help.”

With this assurance, they left the Maggid with hopeful hearts and went out into the street. Before long, they saw a coach coming down the street, pulled by two horses. The driver was a crude-looking peasant, dressed in the rough cloth and sheepskin, typical of his station. Hailing the coach, they inquired, “Can we join you?” “Get in the wagon,” was the curt response. To their surprise, he neither asked their destination nor demanded a fee. With complete faith in the tzaddik, they climbed aboard and were on their way. After about half-an-hour’s travel over the bumpy dirt road, they reached a forest. Undeterred by the thick trunks and large roots, the driver pressed on.

As they continued into the woods, the woman and her brother suddenly felt drowsy, and fell into a deep slumber. A jolt awoke them, and to their horror, the coach turned over and they were flung from their seats. When they came

to their senses, they found themselves sprawled on the hard earth in middle of the woods. Looking around, they could see no trace of the wagon or its driver. Filled with dread, they realized that they had no idea how far they had travelled, or in which direction the city they sought was to be found.

With no other choice, they began walking. They walked for about an hour until they reached the edge of the woods. As they walked out into the open, they were amazed to find themselves not far from a big city. The agunah, seeing it, joyously exclaimed, “Baruch Hashem! The tzaddik’s words are true! This is the very city that I saw in the bowl of water!” Several minutes of walking brought them to the outskirts of the city. “Let’s walk the streets; maybe, with Hashem’s help, we’ll find the marketplace I saw.” Sure enough, after a few minutes, they rounded a bend and there it was: the city marketplace, with its overwhelming jumble of sights, sounds and smells. Making their way past haggling customers and harried merchants, they gazed intently into each window they passed. Finally, they spotted a tailor shop. Looking inside, the woman immediately spotted her long-lost husband. “Let’s not be too hasty,” said her brother. “If we confront him now, he may very well deny that he’s your husband. Let’s go and ask the local rav what to do.”

A brief search led them to the study of the rav of the city. “Where do you come from,” he asked. When they answered “from Koznitz” the Rav said, “That’s very distant; 80 parsos (190 miles) away.” To the rav’s great surprise, they replied, “We left from there this very morning.” After hearing their incredible story and seeing the sleeve which they had brought with them, the rav was very impressed. He exclaimed, “Blessed is Hashem, who has not abandoned us, and who gave tzaddikim of our time ruach hakodesh.” The

agunah then described her husband's appearance and the shop where he worked. "I know the man well", said the rav. "He's been living here for a number of years, and has a wife and children." Assuring them that it will all turn out okay, and exhorting them to keep a close eye on the sleeve, the rav led them to a side room and closed the door.

Returning to his study, the rav sent for the tailor, who, wasting no time, appeared before the rav as quickly as his legs could carry him. "Are you married?" asked the Rav. "Surely the rav is aware that I have a wife and children," the tailor answered. "This I know," said the rav. "My question was whether you have a wife from before you married this woman." "I was once married," the tailor admitted, "but I was single when I came to our town."

"What did you sew today?" asked the rav. "Funny you should mention that," replied the tailor. "A strange thing happened to me today. My employees and I were sitting around the worktable, busily assembling various garments. I was ironing the sleeve of a coat that I was in the midst of sewing for an officer of the army, when suddenly it flew out of my hand and disappeared without a trace. We turned the store upside down, but we couldn't find it. I can think of no explanation for this bizarre occurrence," he concluded. "What would you be willing to give me if I could get you the sleeve?" asked the rav. "That's impossible," said the man. "Quite the contrary," replied the rav, and with those words he rose from his chair, opened the door, and told the agunah, "Give your husband his sleeve." The woman walked into the room and placed the sleeve on the rav's table.

The eyes of the tailor widened in shock as his face lost its color. "This is it," he said, in a weak voice. "This is the very sleeve that flew out of my hand." In his astonishment at seeing the sleeve, he didn't realize who had brought it into

the room. “This is, indeed, your sleeve,” said the rav. “And I believe the woman who brought it to you is your first wife.” The tailor looked up and the shock of seeing his wife, together with his surprise at the appearance of the sleeve, was too much for him to bear and he collapsed on the floor, unconscious.

After some effort, he was brought back to his senses. The rav told him the entire story of how the woman came to the city and how she possessed his sleeve. Shaken, the man admitted that she was, in fact, still married to him, and he gave her a get that very day, just as the Maggid promised.

[Adapted from the sefer “Sippurim Nora’im” by R’ Ya’akov Cadaner, a chassid of the Mittlerer Rebbe. He writes that he heard this story from a man named R. Dovid, who heard it from the tailor, the agunah, and other people who were in the room when she took the sleeve out of the bowl.]

