

**Good Shabbos Everyone** . In this week's parsha Yakov Avinu blesses his sons, the 12 tribes. There are many deeper meanings which are hinted to in the blessings. Regarding the blessing for Yehuda, his father Yakov says, "Red eyed from wine, and white toothed from milk." (Bereishis 49,12) The Sages say that in this blessing is hinted to the idea that it is better to smile at someone than to give him milk; meaning that it is even better to be nice to someone than to give them something. The following story illustrates the importance of being kind to others.

One Friday morning in December 1996, Sheppy Borgen was driving from Williamsburg to Boro Park. The corner of Bedford Avenue and Keap Street is an unofficial meeting place for religious Jews seeking rides to Boro Park. Dozens of people get their rides there every day.

As Sheppy came to the light at Bedford and Keap, just two blocks before entering the Brooklyn Queens Expressway, he noticed a chassidische fellow waiting on the corner, peering into each passing car hoping for a ride. Sheppy slowed to a halt, opened the passenger-side window, and called out in Yiddish, "Do you need a ride?" The chassid said "yes," and Sheppy motioned for him to get into the back seat of his Town Car and told him to make himself comfortable.

Sheppy, who lives in Forest Hills, Queens, is a tall and imposing fellow with a heart to match. He is admired and liked by everyone. He was president of his shul for many years, has been honored by numerous organizations, and is an easy conversationalist. He and the chassid made small talk as traffic, in a rare departure from the usual, moved swiftly through downtown Brooklyn under the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges past Atlantic Avenue onto the Prospect Expressway. Since it was Friday, the chassid spoke of the upcoming parshah. Sheppy countered with a relevant story from his repertoire of favorite stories.

The chassid spoke of his children and grandchildren and Sheppy spoke of the upcoming wedding of his daughter in three days. When they arrived in Boro Park the two wished each other "Gut Shabbos" and "mazel and simchas" in each other's families.

Within minutes of leaving the car, the chassid realized that he had left a bag with very valuable contents in Sheppy's car. He became frantic because he didn't know the driver's name, only that he lived in Queens and was about to marry off his daughter.

Later that morning when Sheppy came to his office in Long Island City, he emptied the contents of his car and he, too, realized that the chassid had left a bag in the back seat. He looked into the bag and saw that there were numerous brass pipes and tubes that seemed to be of little value. He put the bag in his office and figured he would deal with it when he got back on Monday. He, too, had no idea of the identity of the chassid except that he lived in Boro Park and had nice things to say about the parshah.

That afternoon, the chassid went to the Skulener Rebbe, Rabbi Yisrael Portugal, and worriedly told his Rebbe of his loss. "Much of my parnassah (livelihood) for the next year is in that bag," he cried. "How can I get it back?" The Rebbe thought for a moment and then called in his gabbai (attendant) and gave him instructions.

Rabbi Peretz Steinberg, Rav of the Young Israel of Queens Valley and former president of the Vaad Harabbonim of Queens, was surprised to get a call from the Skulener gabbai that erev Shabbos. "The Skulener Rebbe wants to know if you know anyone in Queens that is making a chasuna for a daughter in the next few days." The gabbai explained that the contents in the missing bag were valued at close to \$40,000. It was actually unprocessed gold that would be used for bracelets, earrings, and necklaces. "Queens is a big place," chuckled Rabbi Steinberg, "there is Kew Garden Hills, Kew Gardens, Rego Park, Forest Hills, Hillcrest, Jamaica Estates — a Yid from any of those places could have given the chassid a ride." "The owner thinks that the driver said he was in the chemical soap business. Does that help?" "That helps," said Rabbi Steinberg. "I'll see what I can find out." "Please," the gabbai pleaded, "the man is desperate and he stands to lose a fortune."

Friday night as Rabbi Steinberg peered at the balabatim (business people) in his shul, he noticed Mr. Jerry Meyer. "Jerry is a photographer," thought Rabbi Steinberg. "He might know." After davening, Rabbi Steinberg approached Mr. Meyer and said, "Jerry, I'm trying to help a Yid in Boro Park. Are you by any chance doing a wedding for a Queens family next week?" Jerry thought for a moment and said, "Yes, I'm doing a wedding for Sheppy Borgen, Tuesday night in Westchester."

"Do you know what he does for a living?" Rabbi Steinberg asked anxiously. "Isn't he in the industrial cleaning business or something like that?" asked Jerry. Rabbi Steinberg was elated at the possibility of having solved the mystery so quickly. He couldn't wait to call Sheppy Borgen, who lives a few miles away in Forest Hills.

After Shabbos, Rabbi Steinberg called Sheppy and, in his usual upbeat cheery voice, wished him mazel tov on the upcoming wedding. Then, laughing, he asked, "Did you by any chance pick up a chassid yesterday in Williamsburgh?" Sheppy laughed, "Rabbi Steinberg, are you a navi - prophet? How do you know? I actually did and he left a bag in my car." "That's exactly why I'm calling. It's not some bag. It's got close to \$40,000 dollars worth of unprocessed gold in it!" "What?" exclaimed Sheppy. "It looked like cheap pieces of piping. But okay, if you say it's expensive, I'll bring it back on Monday when I go into the office."

"No," said Rabbi Steinberg. "I'm sorry to bother you, but it's too valuable to leave unattended for that long. Could I trouble you to get it to me soon as you can, tonight?" When Sheppy readily agreed, Rabbi Steinberg called the Skulener gabbai and told him the good news. By Sunday morning the material was in the hand of its rightful owner. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**