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## ***The Guest Who Wore All White***

A Jewish woman in Jerusalem who was not blessed with children after many years of marriage felt more and more distressed with each passing year. She visited many righteous people and prominent rabbis and asked them to bless her, but she remained childless.

One day, a woman acquaintance gave her a strong recommendation: many women in a similar situation had received the gift of children after praying at the grave of our matriarch Rachel in Beit Lechem ("Bethlehem").

The childless woman decided to take upon herself to say the whole book of *Tehilim* (Psalms) once a week at the gravesite of Rachel. She fulfilled her commitment, and to her immense delight she became pregnant and after a year gave birth to a baby boy.

This became cause for pure joy and excitement for all her family and friends and neighbors, since she had been married for twenty years until this first child. The new mother knew in her heart that he was born in the merit of our Matriarch Rachel, and she felt strongly that she wanted to give "Mama Rachel" a personal invitation to the *brit mila* (circumcision ceremony).

She wrote a nice invitation, put it into a white envelope and made a special trip to Beit Lechem in order to place the invitation on Rachel's gravesite.

When she approached the grave, she saw that a large number of Israel soldiers were positioned around the building. The soldiers explained to the woman that riots were going on and the Arabs were throwing rocks at anyone who attempted to approach. They refused to allow her to go inside, not even for brief two minutes she was begging them for. They kept repeating that it was too dangerous.

She, however, refused to give up. She approached a small group of the Palestinian policemen and in Arabic explained the reason for her visit. She pleaded with them to let her go inside. They appreciated her plea, the highest ranking one gave an order, and four armed Arab policemen escorted her into the building over the grave.

She put the envelope on the grave, expressed a few words of warm gratitude, said a few chapters of *Tehilim* and left the place, again escorted by the policemen, whom she thanked.

A large number of people came to the circumcision – relatives and friends, and others as well who had heard about the 'miracle' birth after twenty years. Everyone wanted to participate in the exalted joy of the special

occasion. One close friend even arranged for a video photographer to film the event.

A few minutes before bringing the boy into the Covenant of Abraham, a beautiful, refined-looking woman entered the hall. She wore a long white dress and made such a strong impression that many women stood up and pressed her hand, despite the fact that they had no idea who she was.

The woman approached the mother of the boy, embraced her, kissed her on her cheeks and wished her *'Mazal Tov'*.

The *brit* was performed and everybody felt the exceptionally great joy.

After a few days the family received the video film of the *brit*, and a CD in order to watch the movie on their computer.

As they stared at the screen, they saw something very strange: one of the women got up from her seat, smiled, and pressed her hand – into thin air! After that, another woman got up and pressed her hand in the air. This happened a few times, always with a different woman.

Then, they saw how the mother of the boy made a motion as if embracing somebody and offering her cheeks for a kiss – but without seeing any person doing it!

The watched the movie over and over again with the same strange events repeating themselves. Finally they realized that the video camera simply did not catch the beautiful woman dressed in her white frock.

*According to Jewish custom, if you are personally invited to a brit mila, it is such an important occasion that you have to come....*

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*Source.* This story was told all over Israel around the year 2000. Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition in *Chassidic Gems II* by **Tuvia Litzman**.

*Connection:* Seasonal -- Rosh Hashana (see Jeremiah 31:14-19, which also constitutes the last 6 verses of the Haftorah of the 2nd day of Rosh Hashana).