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## From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

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### **Second Chance**

"This is a story that must be told," **Rabbi Meir Shapira** told his disciples. "It is a story never before published. I discovered it in the records of the Lublin Jewish community, and deserves publicity since it concerns the greatness of *tzadikim* and what they are able to accomplish." He began:

**Rabbi Shlomo Luria** had a disciple whose wife died in her prime, not having given birth to any children. The man mourned her for the proscribed seven days but when after that he persisted in his black gloom and deep depression, people took note. The Maharshel summoned the man to him and asked what was bothering him.

"Just before my wife died, she made me promise her never to marry again," he wept. "But I am still young and have never been blessed with children...."

The rabbi reassured the man that it was permissible to marry, which he did before long.

Shortly after his marriage, however, the man suddenly, inexplicably, died. All of Lublin seethed with the news.

As soon as the Maharshel was told of the death, he summoned the *chevra kadisha* (Jewish burial society) to him. "Prepare him for burial as usual," he instructed, "and lay him inside the grave. But do nothing further. Just notify me and I will come."

His instructions were filled to the letter. When the body had been lowered into the grave, the chevra kadisha sent for the Maharshel. He came to the cemetery, wrote out a note and placed it in the dead man's hand.

"Shalom! Peace unto you, O heavenly hosts! How can this be possible? Does not a positive commandment of the Torah [to reproduce] overrule a negative one [to not break promises]? I decree in the name of the Torah that you return this man to me!"

The Maharshel signed the letter, then told the people to let the grave remain uncovered and leave the cemetery.

After about an hour had elapsed the entire city was aware that something most unusual had happened. The young man who had just been laid in the

newly dug grave was suddenly seen walking in his shrouds along the city streets as if nothing had happened. People could talk of nothing else. The Maharshal's esteem reached higher levels than it had ever before, even in a community that already revered him highly.

But this was not the end of the story.

The young man could not find another woman willing to marry him. It was no simple undertaking to consent to wed one that had cheated the grave.

Seeing this development, the Maharshal took further action. He called upon the angel of forgetfulness to obliterate all memory of this incident in the minds of the Lublin community. And that is exactly what happened [although apparently the written account remained in the Lublin annals – YT]. After a few days people stopped talking about the matter and forgot it had ever occurred. The young man went about his way as if nothing unusual had happened and in due time remarried and fathered children who studied Torah and continued in the Jewish tradition.

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Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from //dailyzohar.com/tzadikim/

*Biographical Glimpses:*

**Rabbi Shlomo Luria, the "Maharshal"**, was one of the leading Torah scholars of the sixteenth century. His writings are studied and venerated still today. His major work of Jewish Law, *Yam Shel Shlomo*, covers sixteen tractates of the Talmud (although only seven are still extant). He served as Rabbi and head of the Rabbinical court in Lublin, one of the most important centers of Jewish life at that time. Most of the greatest European rabbis of the time were disciples of the Maharshal. He was a relative of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, probably his great uncle.

**Rabbi Yehuda-Meir Shapira** [5647 – 7 Cheshvan 5693 (1887 – October 1933)], a Chortkover Chasid, was a prominent Polish rabbi and rosh yeshiva, also known as the Lubliner Rav. He is noted for his establishment of the **Daf Yomi** study program in 1923, and the founding of the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva in 1930. (based on Wikipedia)

*Connection:* The 7th of the Jewish month of Adar is the date that Moses passed away. The Torah tells us that G-D Himself buried him (whatever that means). An ancient tradition is that therefore for the *Chevra Kadisha* ("Jewish Burial Society) Adar 7 is a holiday – a day off - (and in some places a fast day), because on that day G-d takes care of burials.