

ת"סב

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles <editor@ascentofsafed.com>

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Saved by Covid-19!

In the Israeli town of Rechasim, near Haifa, a young orphan recently [January 2021] celebrated his *Bar Mitzvah*. His mother is a poor widow and they really have no money. The boy gets great pleasure from spiritual music, soulful Chassidic *nigunim* – wordless melodies -- and appreciates hearing talented singers.

The mother contacted Mr. C, a kind businessman who helps her financially. "Please do my son a great favor. He has no father. Bring an excellent singer to his *Bar Mitzvah*. It will bring him such happiness."

So, this Mr. C contacted a particular local professional singer who he knew would fit the bill. He explained to him upfront that there was no money to pay for his services.

The singer shrugged and responded, "This is my living. I can't perform for free."

Mr. C refused to take "no" for an answer. "The boy has no father. Along with the current lockdown restrictions it will be a sad occasion. You can make it into a time of joy. Remember: the Rambam teaches that there is no greater pleasure for G-d than when we gladden the hearts of widows and orphans..."

The orphan boy's situation touched the singer's heart and he agreed to perform at no cost. At the celebration, he sat near the *Bar Mitzvah* lad, and each time he got up to sing, everyone felt uplifted. Thanks to him, it became an exciting and lively event, and was a huge success. For that night, the young boy forgot all his worries.

Two days later, the singer receives a surprise phone call. "The *Bar Mitzvah* boy has Corona. You have to quarantine for two weeks."

The singer was so upset. "I give up one night of work to sing for free and now I can't earn any money at all for two whole weeks!"

After another few days and the singer arranges to be tested. He is devastated to find out that he has Corona himself! "This is my reward for the *mitzvah* of

bringing joy to an orphan?” he thinks. “Another two weeks without work! Why is this happening to me?”

Finally he recovers from his illness, and starts to seek new bookings locally. But then he is contacted by an organization in New York that arranges *Bar Mitzvah* celebrations for orphans. They are arranging a lavish event for boys who have become *Bar Mitzvah* in the past few months. There were to be a number of top-class entertainers there, and they wanted him to be one of them. They offered to fly him in for a very generous payment, more than he would earn from many nights of work, more even than he would have made during his entire period of isolation. Not only that, this could be a special opportunity for him, a breakthrough to the world-stage.

“How did you hear about me?” he asked wonderingly. They answered that someone from the organization had attended the *Bar Mitzvah* of the orphan and was very impressed with the way he had transformed the event to be *so* lively. So they decided that it was highly desirable that he too should perform at this event.

“However,” said the organizer, “we cannot take the risk that you might possibly infect others, especially since you would be coming from Israel. So, there is one condition; otherwise, we can’t hire you:

“You must already have been ill with Corona and have fully recovered!”

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Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the video recording of **Rabbi Elimelech Biderman** telling this story [in Yiddish with English subtitles. If you wish to receive a copy of the XXX video, send a WhatsApp request to me at: +972-526-770-137.



**Postscript to this story by Rabbi Biderman:**

We never lose from doing a *Mitzvah*!

*Connection:* The weekly reading of *Trumah* opens with a list of a large variety of monetary and non-monetary donations. Time is also a donation!

**Two more postscripts, from the editor:**

Refrain from making snap judgments about the Al-mighty’s decisions. It may take a while, maybe even a *long* while, but “everything that descends from Heaven is [ultimately] for good -- YT

“I, G-D, am your healer” can sometimes mean that HE assigns us an illness for a specific good purpose (not just that suffering purifies the soul). -- YT